Building Student Motivation and Academic Skills: Research-Supported Interventions

Jim Wright, Presenter

Learner Objectives:
- Understanding of foundation learning concepts, (e.g., Instructional Hierarchy)
- Knowledge of effective interventions in reading fluency/comprehension, math computation/problem-solving, writing, and study skills
- Ability to increase student motivation by correcting faulty attributions about academic competencies and altering the instructional environment
**Intervention Script Builder** for: Student Name: _________________________  Grade: _________

Teacher/Team: ____________________________  Intervention Start Date: _____/___/____

Description of the Target Academic or Behavior Concern: _____________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention Check</th>
<th>Intervention Preparation Steps: Describe any preparation (creation or purchase of materials, staff training, etc.) required for this intervention.</th>
<th>Person(s) Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This step took place Y__ N__</td>
<td>1. ______________________________________________________________________________________</td>
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<td>This step took place Y__ N__</td>
<td>2. ______________________________________________________________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>This step took place Y__ N__</td>
<td>3. ______________________________________________________________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<th>Intervention Check</th>
<th>Intervention Steps: Describe the steps of the intervention. Include enough detail so that the procedures are clear to all who must implement them.</th>
<th>Person(s) Responsible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This step took place Y__ N__</td>
<td>1. ______________________________________________________________________________________</td>
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<td>5. ______________________________________________________________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>This step took place Y__ N__</td>
<td>6. ______________________________________________________________________________________</td>
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Research Citation(s) / References: List the published source(s) that make this a ‘scientifically based’ intervention.

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Intervention Quality Check: How will data be collected to verify that this intervention is put into practice as it was designed? (Select at least one option.)

- Classroom Observation: Number of observations planned? _____________

  Person responsible for observations?: _________________________________

- Teacher Intervention Rating Log: How frequently will the teacher rate intervention follow-through?

  Daily ___  Weekly ___

- Teacher Verbal Report: Who will check in with the teacher for a verbal report of how the intervention is progressing? ________________________________

  Approximately when during the intervention period will this verbal ‘check in’ occur? _________

- Rating Intervention Follow-Through: Select either the classroom teacher/team or an outside observer to rate the quality of the intervention and check the appropriate set of directions below.

  ___ **Teacher Directions**: Make copies of this intervention script. Once per week, review the steps in the intervention script and note (Y/N) whether each step was typically followed. Then write any additional notes about the intervention in the blank below

  ___ **Independent Observer Directions**: Make copies of this intervention script. At several points during the intervention, make an appointment to observe the intervention in action. While observing the intervention, go through the steps in the intervention script and note (Y/N) whether each step was typically followed. Then write any additional notes about the intervention in the space below

  Intervention Observation Notes: ________________________________________________

  ____________________________________________________________________________

  ____________________________________________________________________________

  ____________________________________________________________________________
Reading Comprehension Checklist  
(National Reading Panel, 2000; Pressley & McDonald, 1997)

Before reading the text, the student:

<p>| | | | |</p>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__Y</td>
<td>__N</td>
<td>__More data needed</td>
<td>Articulates his or her general purpose or reason for reading the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Y</td>
<td>__N</td>
<td>__More data needed</td>
<td>Sets specific goals, expectations, or outcomes to be attained by reading the selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Y</td>
<td>__N</td>
<td>__More data needed</td>
<td>Previews the text (e.g., looking over chapter and section headings, examining illustrations, tables, and figures) to build a preliminary mental map of the content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Y</td>
<td>__N</td>
<td>__More data needed</td>
<td>Identifies sections of the text that are more relevant or less relevant to the reader’s goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Y</td>
<td>__N</td>
<td>__More data needed</td>
<td>Adopts a ‘reading plan’ to most efficiently accomplish the pre-set goals</td>
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</table>

While reading the text, the student:

<p>| | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__Y</td>
<td>__N</td>
<td>__More data needed</td>
<td>Accesses his or her ‘prior knowledge’ of the topic to more fully understand the meaning of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Y</td>
<td>__N</td>
<td>__More data needed</td>
<td>Continually monitors his or her understanding of the reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Y</td>
<td>__N</td>
<td>__More data needed</td>
<td>Uses strategies as needed to define the meanings of unknown words, to memorize content, and to overcome other difficulties encountered during reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Y</td>
<td>__N</td>
<td>__More data needed</td>
<td>Engages in closer, more careful reading in those sections of the text that relate specifically to the student’s reading goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Y</td>
<td>__N</td>
<td>__More data needed</td>
<td>Dialogs with the writer by recording information (e.g., in notes written in the page margin or in a reader’s diary) about points of uncertainty, confusion, agreement, or disagreement, further elaborations of an idea presented in the text, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Y</td>
<td>__N</td>
<td>__More data needed</td>
<td>Jumps back and forth in the text as needed to check facts, clear up confusion, or answer questions</td>
</tr>
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</table>

When finished reading the text, the student:

<p>| | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__Y</td>
<td>__N</td>
<td>__More data needed</td>
<td>Makes use of ‘text lookback’, rereading sections of the text if needed to clarify understanding, clear up confusion, or more fully comprehend content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Y</td>
<td>__N</td>
<td>__More data needed</td>
<td>Reviews notes from his or her reading to summarize the ‘gist’ (key ideas) of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Y</td>
<td>__N</td>
<td>__More data needed</td>
<td>Continues to think about the text and the relation of its ideas or content to previous readings or the student’s own knowledge and experiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Directions: Use this checklist to inventory students’ reading comprehension skills. Any comprehension sub-skill that is marked ‘N[0]’ should be targeted for intervention.

References:


## Writing Skills Checklist

**Directions:** Use this checklist to inventory students' foundation writing skills. Any writing skill that is marked 'N[o]' should be targeted for intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem?</th>
<th>Writing Competency</th>
<th>Sample Intervention Ideas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Physical Production of Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
| ___ Y ___ N | **Writing Speed.** Writes words on the page at a rate equal or nearly equal to that of classmates | • Teach keyboarding skills  
• Allow student to dictate ideas into a tape-recorder and have a volunteer (e.g., classmate, parent, school personnel) transcribe them |
| ___ Y ___ N | **Handwriting.** Handwriting is legible to most readers | • Provide training in handwriting  
• Teach keyboarding skills |
|          | **Mechanics & Conventions of Writing** |                        |
| ___ Y ___ N | **Grammar & Syntax.** Knowledge of grammar (rules governing use of language) and syntax (grammatical arrangement of words in sentences) is appropriate for age and/or grade placement | • Teach rules of grammar, syntax  
• Have students compile individualized checklists of their own common grammar/syntax mistakes; direct students to use the checklist to review work for errors before turning in |
| ___ Y ___ N | **Spelling.** Spelling skills are appropriate for age and/or grade placement | • Have student collect list of own common misspellings; assign words from list to study; quiz student on list items  
• Have student type assignments and use spell-check |
|          | **Writing Content** |                        |
| ___ Y ___ N | **Vocabulary.** Vocabulary in written work is age/grade appropriate | • Compile list of key vocabulary and related definitions for subject area; assign words from list to study; quiz student on definitions of list items  
• Introduce new vocabulary items regularly to class; set up cooperative learning activities for students to review vocabulary |
| ___ Y ___ N | **Word Choice.** Distinguishes word-choices that are appropriate for informal (colloquial, slang) written discourse vs. formal discourse | • Present examples to the class of formal vs. informal word choices  
• Have students check work for appropriate word choice as part of writing revision process |
<p>| ___ Y ___ N | <strong>Audience.</strong> Identifies targeted audience for writing assignments and alters written content to match needs of projected audience | • Direct students to write a 'targeted audience profile' as a formal (early) step in the writing process; have students evaluate the final writing product to needs of targeted audience during the revision process |
| ___ Y ___ N | <strong>Plagiarism.</strong> Identifies when to credit authors for use of excerpts quoted verbatim or unique ideas taken from other written works | • Define plagiarism for students. Use plentiful examples to show students acceptable vs. unacceptable incorporation of others' words or ideas into written compositions |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Preparation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>___ Y ___ N</strong></td>
<td><strong>Topic Selection.</strong> Independently selects appropriate topics for writing assignments</td>
<td>• Have student generate list of general topics that interest him or her; sit with the student to brainstorm ideas for writing topics that relate to the student’s own areas of interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>___ Y ___ N</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing Plan.</strong> Creates writing plan by breaking larger writing assignments into sub-tasks (e.g., select topic, collect source documents, take notes from source documents, write outline, etc.)</td>
<td>• Create generic pre-formatted work plans for writing assignments that break specific types of larger assignments (e.g., research paper) into constituent parts. Have students use these plan outlines as a starting point to making up their own detailed writing plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>___ Y ___ N</strong></td>
<td><strong>Note-Taking.</strong> Researches topics by writing notes that capture key ideas from source material</td>
<td>• Teach note-taking skills; have students review note-cards with the teacher as quality check.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Production &amp; Revision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>___ Y ___ N</strong></td>
<td><strong>Adequate ‘Seat Time’.</strong> Allocates realistic amount of time to the act of writing to ensure a quality final product</td>
<td>• Use teacher’s experience and information from proficient student writers to develop estimates of minimum writing ‘seat time’ needed to produce quality products for ‘typical’ writing assignments (e.g., 5-paragraph opinion essay; 10-page term paper). Share with students. • Have students keep a writing diary to record amount of time spent in act of writing for each assignment. Require that this information be submitted along with the students' assignment. (Additional idea: Consider asking parents to monitor and record their child’s writing time.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>___ Y ___ N</strong></td>
<td><strong>Oral vs. Written Work.</strong> Student’s dictated and written passages are equivalent in complexity and quality</td>
<td>• Allow student to dictate ideas into a tape-recorder and have a volunteer (e.g., classmate, parent, school personnel) transcribe them. • Permit the student to use speech-to-text software (e.g., Dragon Naturally Speaking) to dictate first drafts of writing assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>___ Y ___ N</strong></td>
<td><strong>Revision Process.</strong> Revises initial written draft before turning in for a grade or evaluation</td>
<td>• Create a rubric containing the elements of writing that students should review during the revision process; teach this rubric to the class; link a portion of the grade on writing assignments to students’ use of the revision rubric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>___ Y ___ N</strong></td>
<td><strong>Timely Submission.</strong> Turns in written assignments (class work, homework) on time</td>
<td>• Provide student incentives for turning work in on time. • Work with parents to develop home-based plans for work completion and submission. • Institute school-home communication to let parents know immediately when important assignments are late or missing.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Jim Wright  
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jim@jimwrightonline.com
The ability to read allows individuals access to the full range of a culture's artistic and scientific knowledge. Reading is a complex act. Good readers are able fluently to decode the words on a page, to organize and recall important facts in a text, to distill from a reading the author's opinions and attitudes, and to relate the content of an individual text to a web of other texts previously read. The foundation that reading rests upon is the ability to decode. Emergent readers require the support of more accomplished readers to teach them basic vocabulary, demonstrate word attack strategies, model fluent reading, and provide corrective feedback and encouragement. Newly established readers must build fluency and be pushed to exercise their reading skills across the widest possible range of settings and situations. As the act of decoding becomes more effortless and automatic, the developing reader is able to devote a greater portion of cognitive energy to understanding the meaning of the text. Reading comprehension is not a single skill but consists of a cluster of competencies that range from elementary strategies for identifying and recalling factual content to highly sophisticated techniques for inferring an author's opinions and attitudes. As researcher Michael Pressley points out, reading comprehension skills can be thought of as unfolding along a timeline. Before beginning to read a particular selection, the skilled student reader must engage prior knowledge, predict what the author will say about the topic, and set specific reading goals. While reading, the good reader self-monitors his or her understanding of the text, rereads sentences and longer passages that are unclear, and updates predictions about the text based on what he or she has just read. After completing a text, the good reader summarizes its main points (perhaps writing them down), looks back in the text to clarify any points that are unclear, and continues to think about the text and its implications for a period of time. Reading comprehension can also be thought of as a bundle of interdependent skills that range from basic to more advanced. Teachers should ensure that students understand and appropriately use simple comprehension strategies (such as looking back in a text to clarify factual information) before teaching them advanced comprehension strategies such as SQ3R ("Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review"). Ultimately, reading is a competency that is continually honed and improved over a lifetime. The teacher's goal is to build students into independent readers whose skills improve with self-guided practice. Below are a number of instructional strategies to promote word decoding, reading decoding, and reading comprehension.

**Independent Practice: Set Up Reading Centers** *(Florida Center for Reading Research, 2005)*. When students have mastered a reading skill, they can work independently at reading centers to practice and become more fluent in that skill under the watchful eye of the teacher. The reading center is set up with fun and engaging activities designed to extend and reinforce literacy content presented by the teacher. Students work on independent reading-related activities individually or in pairs or groups. As examples of reading center choices, students may listen to taped books, read alone or to each other, use magnetic letters to spell a specified list of words, or create storyboards or comic strips that incorporate pictures and words. Each reading center activity is tied to specific student literacy goals. The activities in reading centers may change often to give children a chance to practice new skills and to keep the content of these centers fresh and engaging.

**Reading Comprehension: Activating Prior Knowledge** *(Hansen, & Pearson, 1983)*. The instructor demonstrates to students how they can access their prior knowledge about a topic to improve comprehension of an article or story. The instructor first explains the benefit of using prior knowledge. The instructor tells students that recalling their prior experiences ("their own life") can help them to understand the content of their reading--because new facts make sense only when we connect them to what we already know. Next, the instructor demonstrates the text prediction strategy to the class by selecting a sample passage (displayed as an overhead) and using a “think-aloud” approach to illustrate the strategy steps: STEP 1: THINK ABOUT WHAT AND WHY:
The teacher connects the article to be read with the instructor's own prior knowledge about the topic. The teacher might say, for example, "I am about to read a short article about [topic]. Before I read the article, though, I should think about my life experiences and what they might tell me about [topic]. By thinking about my own life, I will better understand the article."  

**STEP 2: SELECT MAIN IDEAS FROM THE ARTICLE TO POSE PRIOR-KNOWLEDGE AND PREDICTION QUESTIONS.** The teacher chooses up to 3 main ideas that appear in the article or story. For each key idea, the instructor poses one question requiring that readers tap their own prior knowledge of the idea (e.g., "What are your own attitudes and experiences about [idea]?") and another that prompts them to predict how the article or story might deal with the idea (e.g., "What do you think the article will say about [idea]?"). 

**STEP 3: HAVE STUDENTS READ THE ARTICLE INDEPENDENTLY.** Once the teacher has primed students' prior knowledge by having them respond to the series of prior-knowledge and prediction questions, students read the selection independently.

**Reading Comprehension: Anticipation Reading Guide** (Duffelmeyer, 1994; Merkley, 1996). To activate their prior knowledge of a topic, students complete a brief questionnaire on which they must express agreement or disagreement with 'opinion' questions tied to the selection to be read; students then engage in a class discussion of their responses. The instructor first constructs the questionnaire. Each item on the questionnaire is linked to the content of the article or story that the students will read. All questionnaire items use a 'forced-choice' format in which the student must simply agree or disagree with the item. After students have completed the questionnaire, the teacher reviews responses with the class, allowing students an opportunity to explain their rationale for their answers. Then students read the article or story.

**Reading Comprehension: Building Comprehension of Textbook Readings Through SQ3R** (Robinson, 1946). Students grasp a greater amount of content from their textbook readings when they use the highly structured SQ3R ('Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review') process. (1) **SURVEY:** Prior to reading a section of the textbook, the reader surveys the selection by examining charts, tables, or pictures, looking over chapter headings and subheadings, and reading any individual words or blocks of text highlighted by the publisher. (2) **QUESTION:** In preparation for reading, the reader next generates and writes down a series of key 'questions' about the content based on the material that he or she has surveyed. (3) **READ:** As the reader reads through the selection, he or she seeks answers to the questions posed. (4) **RECITE:** After finishing the selection, the reader attempts to recite from memory the answers to the questions posed. If stuck on a question, the reader scans the text to find the answer. (5) **REVIEW:** At the end of a study session, the reader reviews the list of key questions and again recites the answers. If the reader is unable to recall an answer, he or she goes back to the text to find it.

**Reading Comprehension: Conversing With the Writer Through Text Annotation** (Harris, 1990; Sarkisian, Toscano, Tomkins-Tinch, & Casey, 2003). Students are likely to increase their retention of information when they interact actively with their reading by jotting comments in the margin of the text. Students are taught to engage in an ongoing 'conversation' with the writer by recording a running series of brief comments in the margins of the text. Students may write annotations to record their opinions of points raised by the writer, questions triggered by the reading, or vocabulary words that the reader does not know and must look up. NOTE: Because this strategy requires that students write in the margins of a book or periodical, text annotation is suitable for courses in which students have either purchased the textbook or have photocopies of the reading available on which to write.

**Reading Comprehension: Mining Information from the Text Book** (Gamer, Hare, Alexander, Haynes, & Vinograd, 1984). With 'text lookback' the student increases recall of information by skimming previously read material in the text in a structured manner to look that information up. First, define for the student the difference between 'lookback' and 'think' questions. 'Lookback' questions are those that tell us that the answer can be found right in the article, while 'think' questions are those that ask you to give your own opinion, belief, or ideas. When faced with a lookback question,
readers may need to look back in the article to find the information that they need. But readers can save time by first skimming the article to get to the general section where the answer to the question is probably located. To skim efficiently, the student should (1) read the text-lookback question carefully and highlight the section that tells the reader what to look for (e.g., “What does the article say are the FIVE MOST ENDANGERED SPECIES of whales today?”), (2) look for titles, headings, or illustrations in the article that might tell the reader where the information that he or she is looking for is probably located, (3) read the beginning and end sentences in individual paragraphs to see if that paragraph might contain the desired information.

Reading Comprehension: Previewing the Chapter (Gleason, Archer, & Colvin, 2002). The student who systematically previews the contents of a chapter before reading it increases comprehension--by creating a mental map of its contents, activating prior knowledge about the topic, and actively forming predictions about what he or she is about to read. In the previewing technique, the student browses the chapter headings and subheadings. The reader also studies any important graphics and looks over review questions at the conclusion of the chapter. Only then does the student begin reading the selection.

Reading Comprehension: Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) (Raphael, 1982; Raphael, 1986). Students are taught to identify 'question-answer relationships', matching the appropriate strategy to comprehension questions based on whether a question is based on fact, requires inferential thinking, or draws upon the reader's own experience. Students learn that answers to RIGHT THERE questions are fact-based and can be found in a single sentence, often accompanied by 'clue' words that also appear in the question. Students are informed that they will also find answers to THINK AND SEARCH questions in the text--but must piece those answers together by scanning the text and making connections between different pieces of factual information. AUTHOR AND YOU questions require that students take information or opinions that appear in the text and combine them with the reader's own experiences or opinions to formulate an answer. ON MY OWN questions are based on the students' own experiences and do not require knowledge of the text to answer. Students are taught to identify question-answer relationships in class discussion and demonstration. They are then given specific questions and directed to identify the question type and to use the appropriate strategy to answer.

Reading Comprehension: Reading Actively (Gleason, Archer, & Colvin, 2002). By reading, recalling, and reviewing the contents of every paragraph, the student improves comprehension of the longer passage. The instructor teaches students to first read through the paragraph, paying particular attention to the topic and important details and facts. The instructor then directs students to cover the paragraph and state (or silently recall) the key details of the passage from memory. Finally, the instructor prompts students to uncover the passage and read it again to see how much of the information in the paragraph the student had been able to accurately recall. This process is repeated with all paragraphs in the passage.

Reading Fluency: Listening, Reading, And Receiving Corrective Feedback (Rose & Sherry, 1984; Van Bon, Boksebeld, Font Freide, & Van den Hurk, J.M., 1991). The student 'rehearses' a text by first following along silently as a more accomplished reader (tutor) reads a passage aloud; then the student reads the same passage aloud while receiving corrective feedback as needed. The student and tutor sit side-by-side at a table with a book between them. The tutor begins by reading aloud from the book for about 2 minutes while the student reads silently. If necessary, the tutor tracks his or her progress across the page with an index finger to help the student to keep up. At the end of the 2 minutes, the tutor stops reading and asks the student to read aloud. If the student commits a reading error or hesitates for longer than 3-5 seconds, the tutor tells the student the correct word and has the student continue reading. For each new passage, the tutor first reads the passage aloud before having the student read aloud.

Reading Fluency: Paired Reading (Topping, 1987). The student builds fluency and confidence as a reader by first reading aloud in unison with an accomplished reader, then signaling that he or she
is ready to read on alone with corrective feedback. The more accomplished reader (tutor) and student sit in a quiet location with a book positioned between them. The tutor says to the student, “Now we are going to read aloud together for a little while. Whenever you want to read alone, just tap the back of my hand like this [demonstrate] and I will stop reading. If you come to a word you don’t know, I will tell you the word and begin reading with you again.” Tutor and student begin reading aloud together. If the student misreads a word, the tutor points to the word and pronounces it. Then the student repeats the word. When the student reads the word correctly, tutor and student resume reading through the passage. When the child delivers the appropriate signal (a hand tap) to read independently, the tutor stops reading aloud and instead follows along silently as the student continues with oral reading. The tutor occasionally praises the student in specific terms for good reading (e.g., “That was a hard word. You did a nice job sounding it out!”). If, while reading alone, the child either commits a reading error or hesitates for longer than 5 seconds, the tutor points to the error-word and pronounces it. Then the tutor tells the student to say the word. When the student pronounces the error-word correctly, tutor and student resume reading aloud in unison. This tandem reading continues until the student again signals to read alone.

Reading Fluency: Repeated Reading (Herman, 1985; Rashotte & Torgesen, 1985; Rasinski, 1990). The student increases fluency in decoding by repeatedly reading the same passage while receiving help with reading errors. A more accomplished reader (tutor) sits with the student in a quiet location with a book positioned between them. The tutor selects a passage in the book of about 100 to 200 words in length. The tutor directs the student to read the passage aloud. If the student misreads a word or hesitates for longer than 5 seconds, the tutor reads the word aloud and has the student repeat the word correctly before continuing through the passage. If the student asks for help with any word, the tutor reads the word aloud. If the student requests a word definition, the tutor gives the definition. When the student has completed the passage, the tutor directs the student to read the passage again. The tutor directs the student to continue rereading the same passage until either the student has read the passage a total of 4 times or the student reads the passage at the rate of at least 85 to 100 words per minute. Then tutor and student select a new passage and repeat the process.

Word Decoding: Drilling Error Words (Jenkins & Larson, 1979). When students practice, drill, and receive corrective feedback on words that they misread, they can rapidly improve their vocabulary and achieve gains in reading fluency. Here are steps that the teacher or tutor will follow in the Error Word Drill: (1) When the student misreads a word during a reading session, write down the error word and date in a separate “Error Word Log”. (2) At the end of the reading session, write out all error words from the reading session onto index cards. (If the student has misread more than 20 different words during the session, use just the first 20 words from your error-word list. If the student has misread fewer than 20 words, consult your “Error Word Log” and select enough additional error words from past sessions to build the review list to 20 words.) (3) Review the index cards with the student. Whenever the student pronounces a word correctly, remove that card from the deck and set it aside. (A word is considered correct if it is read correctly within 5 seconds. Self-corrected words are counted as correct if they are made within the 5-second period. Words read correctly after the 5-second period expires are counted as incorrect.) (4) When the student misses a word, pronounce the word for the student and have the student repeat the word. Then say, “What word?” and direct the student to repeat the word once more. Place the card with the missed word at the bottom of the deck. (5) Error words in deck are presented until all have been read correctly. All word cards are then gathered together, reshuffled, and presented again to the student. The drill continues until either time runs out or the student has progressed through the deck without an error on two consecutive cards.

Word Decoding: Tackling Multi-Syllabic Words (Gleason, Archer, & Colvin, 2002). The student uses affixes (suffixes and prefixes) and decodable ‘chunks’ to decode multi-syllabic words. The instructor teaches students to identify the most common prefixes and suffixes present in multi-syllable words, and trains students to readily locate and circle these affixes. The instructor also
trains students to segment the remainder of unknown words into chunks, stressing that readers do not need to divide these words into dictionary-perfect syllables. Rather, readers informally break up the word into graphemes (any grouping of letters including one or more vowels that represents a basic sound unit—or grapheme—in English). Readers then decode the mystery word by reading all affixes and graphemes in the order that they appear in that word.

**Word Decoding: Teach a Hierarchy of Strategies** *(Haring, Lovitt, Eaton & Hansen, 1978)*. The student has a much greater chance of successfully decoding a difficult word when he or she uses a 'Word Attack Hierarchy'—a coordinated set of strategies that move from simple to more complex. The student uses successive strategies until solving the word. (1) When the student realizes that he or she has misread a word, the student first attempts to decode the word again. (2) Next, the student reads the entire sentence, using the context of that sentence to try to figure out the word’s meaning—and pronunciation. (3) The student breaks the word into parts, pronouncing each one. (4) If still unsuccessful, the student uses an index card to cover sections of the word, each time pronouncing only the part that is visible. The student asks 'What sound does ___ make? using phonics information to sound out the word. (5) If still unsuccessful, the student asks a more accomplished reader to read the word.

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Building Student Motivation and Academic Skills


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School-Wide Strategies for Managing...
MATHEMATICS
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Mathematics instruction is a lengthy, incremental process that spans all grade levels. As children begin formal schooling in kindergarten, they develop ‘number sense’, an intuitive understanding of foundation number concepts and relationships among numbers. A central part of number sense is the student’s ability to internalize the number line as a precursor to performing mental arithmetic. As students progress through elementary school, they must next master common math operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) and develop fluency in basic arithmetic combinations (‘math facts’). In later grades, students transition to applied, or ‘word’, problems that relate math operations and concepts to real-world situations. Successful completion of applied problems requires that the student understand specialized math vocabulary, identify the relevant math operations needed to solve the problem while ignoring any unnecessary information also appearing in that written problem, translate the word problem from text format into a numeric equation containing digits and math symbols, and then successfully solve. It is no surprise, then, that there are a number of potential blockers to student success with applied problems, including limited reading decoding and comprehension skills, failure to acquire fluency with arithmetic combinations (math facts), and lack of proficiency with math operations. Deciding what specific math interventions might be appropriate for any student must therefore be a highly individualized process, one that is highly dependent on the student’s developmental level and current math skills, the requirements of the school district’s math curriculum, and the degree to which the student possesses or lacks the necessary auxiliary skills (e.g., math vocabulary, reading comprehension) for success in math. Here are some wide-ranging classroom (Tier I RTI) ideas for math interventions that extend from the primary through secondary grades.

Applied Problems: Encourage Students to Draw to Clarify Understanding (Van Essen & Hamaker, 1990; Van Garderen, 2006). Making a drawing of an applied, or ‘word’, problem is one easy heuristic tool that students can use to help them to find the solution. An additional benefit of the drawing strategy is that it can reveal to the teacher any student misunderstandings about how to set up or solve the word problem. To introduce students to the drawing strategy, the teacher hands out a worksheet containing at least six word problems. The teacher explains to students that making a picture of a word problem sometimes makes that problem clearer and easier to solve. The teacher and students then independently create drawings of each of the problems on the worksheet. Next, the students show their drawings for each problem, explaining each drawing and how it relates to the word problem. The teacher also participates, explaining his or her drawings to the class or group. Then students are directed independently to make drawings as an intermediate problem-solving step when they are faced with challenging word problems. NOTE: This strategy appears to be more effective when used in later, rather than earlier, elementary grades.

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Applied Problems: Improving Performance Through a 4-Step Problem-Solving Approach (Polya, 1957; Williams, 2003). Students can consistently perform better on applied math problems if they follow an efficient 4-step plan of understanding the problem, devising a plan, carrying out the plan, and looking back. (1) UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM. To fully grasp the problem, the student may restate the problem in his or her own words, note key information, and identify missing information. (2) DEVISE A PLAN. In mapping out a strategy to solve the problem, the student may make a table, draw a diagram, or translate the verbal problem into an equation. (3) CARRY OUT THE PLAN. The student implements the steps in the plan, showing work and checking work for each step. (4) LOOK BACK. The student checks the results. If the answer is written as an equation, the student puts the results in words and checks whether the answer addresses the question posed in the original word problem.

Math Computation: Boost Fluency Through Explicit Time-Drills (Rhymer, Skinner, Jackson, McNeill, Smith & Jackson, 2002; Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005; Woodward, 2006). Explicit time-drills are a method to boost students’ rate of responding on math-fact worksheets. The teacher hands out the worksheet. Students are told that they will have 3 minutes to work on problems on the sheet. The teacher starts the stop watch and tells the students to start work. At the end of the first minute in the 3-minute span, the teacher ‘calls time’, stops the stopwatch, and tells the students to underline the last number written and to put their pencils in the air. Then students are told to resume work and the teacher restarts the stopwatch. This process is repeated at the end of minutes 2 and 3. At the conclusion of the 3 minutes, the teacher collects the student worksheets. TIPS: Explicit time-drills work best on ‘simple’ math facts requiring few computation steps. They are less effective on more complex math facts. Also, a less intrusive and more flexible version of this intervention is to use time-prompts while students are working independently on math facts to speed their rate of responding. For example, at the end of every minute of seatwork, the teacher can call the time and have students draw a line under the item that they are working on when that minute expires.

Math Computation: Motivate With ‘Errorless Learning’ Worksheets (Caron, 2007). Reluctant students can be motivated to practice math number problems to build computational fluency when given worksheets that include an answer key (number problems with correct answers) displayed at the top of the page. In this version of an ‘errorless learning’ approach, the student is directed to complete math facts as quickly as possible. If the student comes to a number problem that he or she cannot solve, the student is encouraged to locate the problem and its correct answer in the key at the top of the page and write it in. Such speed drills build computational fluency while promoting students’ ability to visualize and to use a mental number line. TIP: Consider turning this activity into a ‘speed drill’. The student is given a kitchen timer and instructed to set the timer for a predetermined span of time (e.g., 2 minutes) for each drill. The student completes as many problems as possible before the timer rings. The student then graphs the number of problems correctly computed each day on a time-series graph, attempting to better his or her previous score.

Math Computation: Two Ideas to Jump-Start Active Academic Responding (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005). Research shows that when teachers use specific techniques to motivate their classes to engage in higher rates of active and accurate academic responding, student learning rates are likely to go up. Here are two ideas to accomplish increased academic responding on math tasks. First, break longer assignments into shorter assignments with performance feedback given after each shorter ‘chunk’ (e.g., break a 20-minute math computation worksheet task into 3 seven-minute assignments). Breaking longer assignments into briefer segments also allows the teacher to praise struggling students more frequently for work completion and effort, providing an additional ‘natural’ reinforcer. Second, allow students to respond to easier practice items orally rather than in written form to speed up the rate of correct responses.

homework planner, and student self-monitoring. (1) Reinforcers: Allow students to earn a small reward (e.g., additional free time) when they turn in all homework assignments for the week. (2) ‘Real-life’ Assignments: Make homework meaningful by linking concepts being taught to students’ lives. In a math lesson on estimating area, for example, give students the homework task of calculating the area of their bedroom and estimating the amount of paint needed to cover the walls. (3) Homework Planner: Teach students to use a homework planner to write down assignments, organize any materials (e.g., worksheets) needed for homework, transport completed homework safely back to school, and provide space for parents and teachers to communicate about homework via written school-home notes. (4) Student Self-Monitoring: Direct students to chart their homework completion each week. Have students plot the number of assignments turned in on-time in green, assignments not turned in at all in red, and assignments turned in late in yellow.

Math Instruction: Consolidate Student Learning During Lecture Through the Peer-Guided Pause (Hawkins, & Brady, 1994). During large-group math lectures, teachers can help students to retain more instructional content by incorporating brief Peer Guided Pause sessions into lectures. Students are trained to work in pairs. At one or more appropriate review points in a lecture period, the instructor directs students to pair up to work together for 4 minutes. During each Peer Guided Pause, students are given a worksheet that contains one or more correctly completed word or number problems illustrating the math concept(s) covered in the lecture. The sheet also contains several additional, similar problems that pairs of students work cooperatively to complete, along with an answer key. Student pairs are reminded to (a) monitor their understanding of the lesson concepts; (b) review the correctly math model problem; (c) work cooperatively on the additional problems, and (d) check their answers. The teacher can direct student pairs to write their names on the practice sheets and collect them as a convenient way to monitor student understanding.

Math Instruction: Increase Student Engagement and Improve Group Behaviors With Response Cards (Armendariz & Umbrecht, 1999; Lambert, Cartledge, Heward & Lo, 2006). Response cards can increase student active engagement in group math activities while reducing disruptive behavior. In the group-response technique, all students in the classroom are supplied with an erasable tablet (‘response card’), such as a chalk slate or laminated white board with erasable marker. The teacher instructs at a brisk pace. The instructor first poses a question to the class. Students are given sufficient wait time for each to write a response on his or her response card. The teacher then directs students to present their cards. If most or all of the class has the correct answer, the teacher praises the group. If more than one quarter of the students records an incorrect answer on their cards, however, the teacher uses guided questions and demonstration to steer students to the correct answer.

Math Instruction: Maintain a Supportive Atmosphere for Classroom “Math Talk” (Cooke & Adams, 1998). Teachers can promote greater student ‘risk-taking’ in mathematics learning when they cultivate a positive classroom atmosphere for math discussions while preventing peers from putting each other down. The teacher models behavioral expectations for open, interactive discussions, praises students for their class participation and creative attempts at problem-solving, and regularly points out that incorrect answers and misunderstandings should be celebrated—as they often lead to breakthroughs in learning. The teacher uses open-ended comments (e.g., “What led you to that answer?”) as tools to draw out students and encourage them to explore and apply math concepts in group discussion. Students are also encouraged in a supportive manner to evaluate each other’s reasoning. However, the teacher intervenes immediately to prevent negative student comments or ‘put-downs’ about peers. As with any problem classroom behavior, a first offense requires that the student meet privately with the instructor to discuss teacher expectations for positive classroom behavior. If the student continues to put down peers, the teacher imposes appropriate disciplinary consequences.

Math Instruction: Support Students Through a Wrap-Around Instruction Plan (Montague, 1997; Montague, Warger & Morgan, 2000). When teachers instruct students in more complex math cognitive
strategies, they must support struggling learners with a ‘wrap-around’ instructional plan. That plan incorporates several elements: (a) Assessment of the student’s problem-solving skills. The instructor first verifies that the student has the necessary academic competencies to learn higher-level math content, including reading and writing skills, knowledge of basic math operations, and grasp of required math vocabulary. (b) Explicit instruction. The teacher presents new math content in structured, highly organized lessons. The instructor also uses teaching tools such as Guided Practice (moving students from known material to new concepts through a thoughtful series of teacher questions) and ‘overlearning’ (teaching and practicing a skill with the class to the point at which students develop automatic recall and control of it). (c) Process modeling. The teacher adopts a ‘think aloud’ approach, or process modeling, to verbally reveal his or her cognitive process to the class while using a cognitive strategy to solve a math problem. In turn, students are encouraged to think aloud when applying the same strategy—first as part of a whole-class or cooperative learning group, then independently. The teacher observes students during process modeling to verify that they are correctly applying the cognitive strategy. (d) Performance feedback. Students get regular performance feedback about their level of mastery in learning the cognitive strategy. That feedback can take many forms, including curriculum-based measurement, timely corrective feedback, specific praise and encouragement, grades, and brief teacher conferences. (e) Review of mastered skills or material. Once the student has mastered a cognitive strategy, the teacher structures future class lessons or independent work to give the student periodic opportunities to use and maintain the strategy. The teacher also provides occasional brief ‘booster sessions’, reteaching steps of the cognitive strategy to improve student retention.

Math Instruction: Unlock the Thoughts of Reluctant Students Through Class Journaling
(Baxter, Woodward & Olson, 2005). Students can effectively clarify their knowledge of math concepts and problem-solving strategies through regular use of class ‘math journals’. Journaling is a valuable channel of communication about math issues for students who are unsure of their skills and reluctant to contribute orally in class. At the start of the year, the teacher introduces the journaling assignment, telling students that they will be asked to write and submit responses at least weekly to teacher-posed questions. At first, the teacher presents ‘safe’ questions that tap into the students’ opinions and attitudes about mathematics (e.g., ‘How important do you think it is nowadays for cashiers in fast-food restaurants to be able to calculate in their head the amount of change to give a customer?’). As students become comfortable with the journaling activity, the teacher starts to pose questions about the students’ own mathematical thinking relating to specific assignments. Students are encouraged to use numerals, mathematical symbols, and diagrams in their journal entries to enhance their explanations. The teacher provides brief written comments on individual student entries, as well as periodic oral feedback and encouragement to the entire class on the general quality and content of class journal responses. Regular math journaling can prod students to move beyond simple ‘rote’ mastery of the steps for completing various math problems toward a deeper grasp of the math concepts that underlie and explain a particular problem-solving approach. Teachers will find that journal entries are a concrete method for monitoring student understanding of more abstract math concepts. To promote the quality of journal entries, the teacher might also assign them an effort grade that will be calculated into quarterly math report card grades.

Math Problem-Solving: Help Students Avoid Errors With the ‘Individualized Self-Correction Checklist’ (Zrebiec Uberti, Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004). Students can improve their accuracy on particular types of word and number problems by using an ‘individualized self-instruction checklist’ that reminds them to pay attention to their own specific error patterns. To create such a checklist, the teacher meets with the student. Together they analyze common error patterns that the student tends to commit on a particular problem type (e.g., ‘On addition problems that require carrying, I don’t always remember to carry the number from the previously added column.’). For each type of error identified, the student and teacher together describe the appropriate step to take to prevent the error from occurring (e.g., ‘When adding each column, make sure to carry numbers when needed.’). These self-check items are compiled into a single checklist. Students are then
encouraged to use their individualized self-instruction checklist whenever they work independently on their number or word problems. As older students become proficient in creating and using these individualized error checklists, they can begin to analyze their own math errors and to make their checklists independently whenever they encounter new problem types.

**Math Review: Balance Massed & Distributed Practice** *(Carnine, 1997)*. Teachers can best promote students acquisition and fluency in a newly taught math skill by transitioning from massed to distributed practice. When students have just acquired a math skill but are not yet fluent in its use, they need lots of opportunities to try out the skill under teacher supervision—a technique sometimes referred to as ‘massed practice’. Once students have developed facility and independence with that new math skill, it is essential that they then be required periodically to use the skill in order to embed and retain it—a strategy also known as ‘distributed practice’. Teachers can program distributed practice of a math skill such as reducing fractions to least common denominators into instruction either by (a) regularly requiring the student to complete short assignments in which they practice that skill in isolation (e.g., completing drill sheets with fractions to be reduced), or (b) teaching a more advanced algorithm or problem-solving approach that incorporates—and therefore requires repeated use of—the previously learned math skill (e.g., requiring students to reduce fractions to least-common denominators as a necessary first step to adding the fractions together and converting the resulting improper fraction to a mixed number).

**Math Review: Teach Effective Test-Preparation Strategies** *(Hong, Sas, & Sas, 2006)*. A comparison of the methods that high and low-achieving math students typically use to prepare for tests suggests that struggling math students need to be taught (1) specific test-review strategies and (2) time-management and self-advocacy skills. Among review-related strategies, deficient test-takers benefit from explicit instruction in how to take adequate in-class notes; to adopt a systematic method to review material for tests (e.g., looking over their notes each night, rereading relevant portions of the math text, reviewing handouts from the teacher, etc.), and to give themselves additional practice in solving problems (e.g., by attempting all homework items, tackling additional problems from the text book, and solving problems included in teacher handouts). Deficient test-takers also require pointers in how to allocate and manage their study time wisely, to structure their study environment to increase concentration and reduce distractions, as well as to develop ‘self-advocacy’ skills such as seeking additional help from teachers when needed. Teachers can efficiently teach effective test-preparation methods as a several-session whole-group instructional module.

**Math Vocabulary: Preteach, Model, and Use Standard Math Terms** *(Chard, D., n.d.)*. Three strategies can help students to learn essential math vocabulary: preteaching key vocabulary items, modeling those vocabulary words, and using only universally accepted math terms in instruction. (1) Preteach key math vocabulary. Math vocabulary provides students with the language tools to grasp abstract mathematical concepts and to explain their own reasoning. Therefore, do not wait to teach that vocabulary only at ‘point of use’. Instead, preview relevant math vocabulary as a regular a part of the ‘background’ information that students receive in preparation to learn new math concepts or operations. (2) Model the relevant vocabulary when new concepts are taught. Strengthen students’ grasp of new vocabulary by reviewing a number of math problems with the class, each time consistently and explicitly modeling the use of appropriate vocabulary to describe the concepts being taught. Then have students engage in cooperative learning or individual practice activities in which they too must successfully use the new vocabulary—while the teacher provides targeted support to students as needed. (3) Ensure that students learn standard, widely accepted labels for common math terms and operations and that they use them consistently to describe their math problem-solving efforts.

**References**


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As students transition to middle and high school, they are expected to depend less on the teacher to manage their instruction and to put increasing energy into becoming self-managing learners. But students must master essential study and organizational skills before they can function as independent learners. Individuals with strong study and organization skills are able to break class and homework assignments into subtasks and use time efficiently to complete those assignments, save and store graded papers and handouts for later retrieval, regularly review class notes and course readings, and practice effective study techniques. Instructors can accelerate the development of students into self-managing learners by explicitly teaching and evaluating study and organization skills and by delivering structured lessons that students can easily follow and capture in notes. Here are a range of ideas that can assist students to study more effectively and become more organized:

**Independent Work. Create Customized ‘Common Mistakes’ Checklists** (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Students can develop an individualized checklist of the kinds of errors that they commonly commit on independent assignments and use this checklist to reduce or eliminate mistakes before turning in those assignments. As a class exercise, give several examples to your students of common mistakes that you find on their assignments (e.g., failure to show all work on math problems; incomplete entries on term-paper outlines). Next, have the class brainstorm a list of mistakes that they are most likely to make. Then direct each student to review the class list and create a customized checklist by selecting the 4-5 mistakes that he or she is most likely to commit. Direct students to keep their customized error checklists and use them to review their assignments before turning in.

**Independent Work: Assign an Adult Advisor** (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Struggling students will do a better job of managing their many academic work and study requirements when they can have informal weekly meetings with an adult advisor. The advisor can be any school staff member who has a good relationship with the student. The role of the advisor is to communicate with other members of the student’s team to ensure that the student is caught up with all homework and classwork assignments and is doing a satisfactory job of preparing for tests and quizzes. The advisor should plan to meet with the student at a fixed time at the start of each week for a brief meeting (1) to review academic progress, (2) help the student to get organized for upcoming assignments and prepare for tests, and (3) provide the student with encouragement and ‘mini-skills’ lessons in organization and study skills as needed.

**Independent Work: Have Students Break Larger Tasks into Smaller Sub-Tasks** (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Students who easily become overwhelmed when given a large assignment to do independently can boost their confidence when taught first to break that assignment down into smaller, more manageable sub-tasks. Select an upcoming assignment that students are expected to complete on their own (e.g., term paper, homework assignment with multiple math problems). Demonstrate for the class or to the individual student how to partition the larger assignment into smaller steps or ‘chunks’. Have the student(s) complete the assignment independently, one sub-task at a time, using your work plan. On the next assignment, have the student(s) subdivide the task into chunks to create their own work plan while you observe and provide feedback.

**Independent Work: Teach Students to Adapt Worksheets** (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). If students seem to struggle with the format of complex worksheets, teach them tricks to reduce the complexity or ‘busyness’ of the sheet. If students appear to become anxious or to lose their place when given a worksheet with a large number of math problems, for example, suggest that they...
fold the page or use a blank piece of paper to hide all problems except the one on which they are currently working. Or if a double-sided worksheet has a complex informational graphic (e.g., a map) on one side of the page and questions to be answered on the flip side of the worksheet, give the student an extra copy of that worksheet so that the student can look at the questions and the graphic at the same time.

**Instruction: Preview & Review Lesson Objectives** *(Beyda, Zentall, & Ferko, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2004).* Teachers can help students to retain the key points of a lesson by previewing the important learning objectives, labeling important points during the lesson, and reviewing those points at the close of the instructional session. Open the lesson by telling students what they will be learning that day and the materials that they will need to accomplish the lesson. During the lesson, emphasize important information that students should write into their class notes. At the end of the lesson, briefly review the central points again to improve student retention.

**Instruction: Signal Key Words or Concepts That Will Be on the Test** *(Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002).* Teachers can improve students’ motivation and boost their performance on tests by writing the examinations first and then structuring course content and review activities to help students to successfully pass these tests. The instructor constructs the test in advance so that it contains the essential elements of course content that students must master. During instruction, whenever the teacher presents to the class any concept, fact, or operation that will appear on the test, the instructor announces that ‘this will be on the test’ as a cue to alert students to attend closely to the information. The teacher also selects review activities that allow students to practice and master course material before they are tested on that material.

**Study Skills: Effective Studying Requires Preparation & Follow-Through** *(University of North Dakota Learning Center, n.d.)*. Effective study habits require that the student prepare before class to more fully understand the instructional content, attend carefully during class for clues about what facts or concepts the teacher views as most important, and quickly review notes after class to fill in any missing information and to cement understanding. In preparation for the class period, the student completes any assigned reading, and looks over notes and quickly skims the reading from the previous class session. During class, the student focuses on the instructor, listening carefully to how the instructor ‘cues’ the class that information is important (e.g., tone of voice, repetition, notes written on the board). If the teacher announces that a particular fact, concept, or idea will appear on a future test, the student records this information in his or her notes. Within 24 hours after class, the student reviews the class notes to help him or her to capture this course information in long-term memory. The student also uses this review opportunity to additional any additional details, to reword notes to clarify their meaning, or to check with other students or the teacher to fill in any gaps in the notes.

**Study Skills: Study Actively** *(University of North Dakota Learning Center, n.d.; Wright, 2002).* Students get much more out of study sessions when they use strategies to actively review the material—such as summarizing main ideas from passages, formulating possible test questions from class notes, reciting information aloud, and studying with others. When reviewing readings from the course, the student should pause after important passages to attempt to summarize the main idea, or ‘gist sentence’ of each passage. While reviewing class notes, the student should attempt to identify concepts or facts from the notes that are likely to appear on an upcoming quiz or test. The student then formulates a possible test question that would be answered by the selection from his or her notes. Some students also find that they retain information more effectively during review when they occasionally read aloud sections from their course readings or class notes. Studying with others is another good method for reviewing course material, as students can motivate and encourage one another during the study session.

**Study Skills: Teach a Structured Note-Taking Process** *(Pauk, 1989).* Students benefit in two ways when using a highly structured note-taking process such as the Cornell System: Not only do they recall more information from lectures because they made the effort to capture it in the form
of notes, but students also have a more complete set of notes to which they can refer when studying for quizzes and tests. The Cornell Notetaking System is organized into the following steps: (1) The student draws a vertical line on blank lined note paper. The line separates the page into a left-margin section that is 2.5 inches in width and another on the right that is 6 inches in width. (2) During reading or lectures, the student jots all notes in the 6-inch section of the page. (3) After leaving class or finishing the reading, the student reduces the notes into key words or key phrases. These condensed words or phrases are jotted into the 2.5-inch left margin of the page. (4) When reviewing course material, the student looks over his or her notes and jots down possible questions from the content that might appear on a test. The student then covers the notes (6-inch section of the page) and attempts to recite answers to the questions that he or she has created—using the key words or phrases in the left margin as prompts. (5) The student reviews notes periodically (e.g., 2-3 times per week), repeating the procedure outlined in step 4.

Study Skills: Use Student Study Schedule (Wright, 2002). A daily study schedule can ensure that the student makes the most efficient use of study time. Each day, the student makes a written schedule for homework and study. The study schedule should also include time for leisure activities—and the student should be sure to limit leisure activities to the time allotted. A study schedule has greater weight if the student’s parent(s) monitor the student’s adherence to the daily schedule.

Work Materials: Organize the Backlog of Old Papers (Sirotowitz, Davis, & Parker, 2003). Students are much better organized when they can identify old papers that should be saved for later review, have a system for labeling and filing these archived papers, and stay caught up by filing papers promptly. The teacher or parent (helping adult) first assists the student in carrying out a ‘paper search’, rummaging through the student's backpack, school locker, bedroom, notebook, or any other location where old papers may have collected. Next, student and helping adult sort through the pile of amassed papers, deciding which should be tossed in the trash and which should be saved. (Candidate papers to save include old tests, teacher handouts, and graded homework.) Then student and adult write at the top of each saved page the subject, the approximate date that the paper was created or handed out, and any other important identifying information (e.g., the textbook chapter or page that a series of handwritten notes were drawn from or are linked to). For each subject, label a manila folder. File all old papers for that subject in the folder, organized by date or by chapter/page number (depending on which scheme seems a more useful way to group the material). Put all folders of sorted papers into a single file cabinet drawer, crate, or other easily accessible location. Then encourage the student to sort through old papers each day and file those that are to be saved away in the appropriate folder. Also, remind the student to review the contents of folders when studying for quizzes and tests.

Work Materials: Schedule Regular ‘Clean Outs’ (Gleason, Colvin, & Archer, 1991; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Students are most productive when they are periodically given time and guidance to organize their work- and storage spaces to better manage the ‘paperflow’ of school work. Prepare a class mini-lesson to present suggestions on how your students should organize their desk or other class workspace, backpack, and/or locker. Work with your class to develop organizational tips (e.g., what does belong in a locker and what does not) and a rubric to judge the degree to which each student’s work- and storage spaces are appropriately organized. Schedule time periodically for the entire class or selected students to organize their work and storage spaces under your supervision. Have students refer to the class rubric and provide teacher feedback as they organize their spaces.

References


Students who have chronic difficulties paying attention in class face the risk of poor grades and even school failure. Inattention may be a symptom of an underlying condition such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. However, teachers should not overlook other possible explanations for student off-task behavior. It may be, for example, that a student who does not seem to be paying attention is actually mismatched to instruction (the work is too hard or too easy) or preoccupied by anxious thoughts. Or the student may be off-task because the teacher's lesson was poorly planned or presented in a disorganized manner. It is also important to remember that even children with ADHD are influenced by factors in their classroom setting and that these students' level of attention is at least partly determined by the learning environment. Teachers who focus on making their instruction orderly, predictable, and highly motivating find that they can generally hold the attention of most of their students most of the time. Here are some ideas to consider to boost rates of student attending and on-task behavior:

**Capture Students’ Attention Before Giving Directions** (Ford, Olmi, Edwards, & Tingstrom, 2001; Martens & Kelly, 1993). Gain the student’s attention before giving directions and use other strategies to ensure the student’s full understanding of them. When giving directions to an individual student, call the student by name and establish eye contact before providing the directions. When giving directions to the whole class, use group alerting cues such as 'Eyes and ears on me!' to gain the class’s attention. Wait until all students are looking at you and ready to listen before giving directions. When you have finished giving directions to the entire class, privately approach any students who appear to need assistance. Quietly restate the directions to them and have them repeat the directions back to you as a check for understanding.

**Class Participation: Keep Students Guessing** (Heward, 1994). Students attend better during large-group presentations if they cannot predict when they will be required to actively participate. Randomly call on students, occasionally selecting the same student twice in a row or within a short time span. Or pose a question to the class, give students 'wait time' to formulate an answer, and then randomly call on a student.

**Employ Proximity Control** (Ford, Olmi, Edwards, & Tingstrom, 2001; Gettinger & Seibert, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Students typically increase their attention to task and show improved compliance...
when the teacher is in close physical proximity. During whole-group activities, circulate around the room to keep students focused. To hold an individual student's attention, stand or sit near the student before giving directions or engaging in discussion.

**Give Clear Directions** *(Gettinger & Seibert, 2002; Gettinger, 1988).* Students will better understand directions when those directions are delivered in a clear manner, expressed in language the student understands, given at a pace that does not overwhelm the student, and posted for later review. When giving multi-step directions orally, write those directions on the board or give to students as a handout to consult as needed. State multi-step directions one direction at a time and confirm that the student is able to comply with each step before giving the next direction.

**Give Opportunities for Choice** *(Martens & Kelly, 1993; Powell & Nelson, 1997).* Allowing students to exercise some degree of choice in their instructional activities can boost attention span and increase academic engagement. Make a list of 'choice' options that you are comfortable offering students during typical learning activities. During independent seatwork, for example, you might routinely let students choose where they sit, allow them to work alone or in small groups, or give them 2 or 3 different choices of assignment selected to be roughly equivalent in difficulty and learning objectives.

**Instruct at a Brisk Pace** *(Carnine, 1976; Gettinger & Seibert, 2002).* When students are appropriately matched to instruction, they are likely to show improved on-task behavior when they are taught at a brisk pace rather than a slow one. To achieve a brisk pace of instruction, make sure that you are fully prepared prior to the lesson and that you minimize the time spent on housekeeping items such as collecting homework or on transitions from one learning activity to another.

**Make the Activity Stimulating** *(U.S. Department of Education, 2004).* Students require less conscious effort to remain on-task when they are engaged in high-interest activities. Make instruction more interesting by choosing a specific lesson topic that you know will appeal to students (e.g., sports, fashion). Or help students to see a valuable 'real-word' pay-off for learning the material being taught. Another tactic is to make your method of instruction more stimulating. Students who don't learn well in traditional lecture format may show higher rates of engagement when interacting with peers (cooperative learning) or when allowed the autonomy and self-pacing of computer-delivered instruction.

**Pay Attention to the On-Task Student** *(DuPaul & Ervin, 1996; Martens & Meller, 1990).* Teachers who selectively give students praise and attention only when those students are on-task are likely to find that these students show improved attention in class as a result. When you have a student who is often off-task, make an effort to identify those infrequent times when the student is appropriately focused on the lesson and immediately give the student positive attention. Examples of teacher attention that students will probably find positive include verbal praise and encouragement, approaching the student to check on how he or she is doing on the assignment, and friendly eye contact.

**Provide a Quiet Work Area** *(U.S. Department of Education, 2004).* Distractable students benefit from a quiet place in the classroom where they can go when they have more difficult assignments to complete. A desk or study carrel in the corner of the room can serve as an appropriate workspace. When introducing these workspaces to students, stress that the quiet locations are intended to help students to concentrate. Never use areas designated for quiet work as punitive 'time-out' spaces, as students will then tend to avoid them.

**Provide Attention Breaks** *(DuPaul & Ervin, 1996; Martens & Meller, 1990).* If students find it challenging to stay focused on independent work for long periods, allow them brief 'attention breaks'. Contract with students to give them short breaks to engage in a preferred activity each time that they have finished a certain amount of work. For example, a student may be allowed to look at a favorite
comic book for 2 minutes each time that he has completed five problems on a math worksheet and checked his answers. Attention breaks can refresh the student—and also make the learning task more reinforcing.

**Reduce Length of Assignments** *(DuPaul & Envin, 1996; U.S. Department of Education, 2004).* Students' attention may drift when completing overly long assignments. For new material, trim assignments to the minimum length that you judge will ensure student understanding. When having students practice skills or review previously taught material, break that review into a series of short assignments rather than one long assignment to help to sustain interest and engagement.

**Schedule Challenging Tasks for Peak Attention Times** *(Brock, 1998).* Many students with limited attention can focus better in the morning, when they are fresh. Schedule those subjects or tasks that the student finds most difficult early in the day. Save easier subjects or tasks for later in the day, when the student's attention may start to wane.

**Select Activities That Require Active Student Responding** *(Gettinger & Seibert, 2002; Heward, 1994).* When students are actively engaged in an activity, they are more likely to be on-task. Avoid long stretches of instructional time in which students sit passively listening to a speaker. Instead, program your instructional activities so that students must frequently "show what they know" through some kind of active [visible] response. For example, you might first demonstrate a learning strategy to students and then divide the class into pairs and have students demonstrate the strategy to each other while you observe and evaluate.

**Transition Quickly** *(Gettinger & Seibert, 2002; Gettinger, 1988).* When students transition quickly between educational activities and avoid instructional 'dead time', their attention is less likely to wander. Train students to transition appropriately by demonstrating how they should prepare for common academic activities, such as group lecture and independent seatwork. Have them practice these transitions, praising the group for timely and correct performance. Provide additional 'coaching' to individual students as needed. During daily instruction, verbally alert students several minutes before a transition to another activity is to occur.

**Use Advance Organizers** *(U.S. Department of Education, 2004).* One strategy to improve on-task behavior is to give students a quick overview of the activities planned for the instructional period or day. This 'advance organizer' provides students with a mental schedule of the learning activities, how those activities interrelate, important materials needed for specific activities, and the amount of time set aside for each activity. All students benefit when the teacher uses advance organizers. However inattentive students especially benefit from this overview of learning activities, as the advance organizer can prompt, mentally prepare, and focus these students on learning right when they most need it.

**Use Preferential Seating** *(U.S. Department of Education, 2004).* Seating the student near the teacher is one tried-and-true method to increase on-task behavior. Preferential seating simply means that you seat the student in a location where he or she is most likely to stay focused on what you are teaching. Remember that all teachers have an 'action zone', a part of the room where they tend to focus most of their instruction. Once you have analyzed your 'action zone' as a teacher, place the student's seat somewhere within that zone. Of course, the ideal seating location for any particular student will vary, depending on the unique qualities of the target student and of your classroom. When selecting preferential seating, consider whether the student might be self-conscious about sitting right next to the teacher. Also, try to select a seat location that avoids other distractions. For example, you may want to avoid seating the student by a window or next to a talkative classmate.

**References**


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School-Wide Strategies for Managing... HYPERACTIVITY

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Hyperactive students tend to have a very high energy level, act impulsively and can be behaviorally distracting. They may fidget, play with objects, tap pencils so loudly against their desk that kids from across the room look over at them, or blurt out answers to teacher questions before the instructor is even finished asking them. When working with students who are hyperactive or impulsive, teachers should keep in mind that these students are very often completely unaware that others view their behavior as distracting or annoying. Teachers working with such children can greatly increase their own effectiveness by clearly communicating behavioral expectations to students, by encouraging and rewarding students who behave appropriately, and by being consistent and fair when responding to problem student behaviors. Here are teacher ideas for managing impulsive or hyperactive students who display problem motor or verbal behaviors:

**Adopt a 'Silent Signal'** (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). You can redirect overactive students in a low-key manner by using a silent signal. Meet privately with the student and identify for the student those motor or verbal behaviors that appear to be most distracting. With the student's help, select a silent signal that you can use to alert the student that his or her behavior has crossed the threshold and now is distracting others. Role-play several scenarios with the student in which you use the silent signal and the student then controls the problem behavior. When you
are able to successfully use the 'silent signal' during instruction, be sure to praise the student privately for responding appropriately and promptly to your signal.

**Allow Discretionary Motor Breaks** *(U.S. Department of Education, 2004).* When given brief 'movement' breaks, highly active students often show improvements in their behaviors. Permit the student to leave his or her seat and quietly walk around the classroom whenever the student feels particularly fidgety. Or, if you judge that motor breaks within the classroom would be too distracting, consider giving the student a discretionary pass that allows him or her to leave the classroom briefly to get a drink of water or walk up and down the hall.

**Encourage Acceptable Outlets for Motor Behavior** *(U.S. Department of Education, 2004).* If the student distracts other students by playing with objects, substitute an alternative motor behavior that will not distract others. Give the student a soft 'stress ball' and encourage the student to squeeze it whenever he or she feels the need for motor movement. Or if the setting is appropriate, allow the student to chew gum as a replacement motor behavior.

**Have the Student Monitor Motor Behaviors and Call-Outs** *(DuPaul & Stoner, 2002).* Students can often change problem behaviors when they pay attention to those behaviors. Have the student monitor his or her motor behaviors or call-outs. First, choose a class period or part of the day when you want the student to monitor distracting behaviors. Next, meet privately with the student to discuss which of that student's behaviors are distracting. Then, together with the student, design a simple distractible behavior-rating form with no more than 3 items (For a student who calls out frequently, for example, a useful rating item might be "How well did I observe the rule today of raising my hand and being called on before giving an answer? Poor – Fair – Good"). Have the student rate his or her behaviors at the end of each class period. Make an effort to praise the student (a) for being accurate in rating behaviors, and (b) for any improvements that you see in the student's behaviors over time.

**Ignore Low-Level Motor Behaviors** *(Sprick, Borgmeier & Nolet, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2004).* Selective ignoring can be an effective teacher response to minor fidgeting or other motor behaviors. If the student's 'fidgety' behaviors are relatively minor and do not seriously derail classroom instruction, the teacher should simply not pay attention to them.

**Remove Unnecessary Items From the Student's Work Area** *(U.S. Department of Education, 2004).* Students who tend to distract themselves and others by playing with objects behave better when their work area is uncluttered. Take away (or direct the student to put away) any items that the student does not need for the work assignment but might be tempted to play with (e.g., extra pens, paper clips).

**Schedule Group 'Stretch Breaks’** *(Brock, 1998).* You can increase the focus of your entire class and appropriately channel the motor behaviors of fidgety students by scheduling brief 'stretch breaks.' At their simplest, stretch breaks consist of having students stand next to their desks, stretch their arms, take a deep breath, and exhale slowly before resuming their seats. Or you can be creative, having students take part in different movements during each break (e.g., "OK class. It's time for a stretch break. Stand by your desk, arms over your head. Then take 3 steps back and 3 steps forward…"). NOTE: When using stretch breaks, be sure that you select movements that all of your students are physically able to accomplish without difficulty.

**Seat the Student Next to Distraction-Resistant Peers** *(Kerr & Nelson, 1998).* One useful strategy for managing low-level motor behaviors is to seat the student next to peers who can generally ignore those behaviors. Rearrange seating in the classroom so that the student is sitting near peers who are good behavior models and are not readily distracted by that student's minor fidgety movements or playing with objects.
Select a ‘Supportive Peer’ (DuPaul & Stoner, 2002). Handpick a classmate who has a good relationship with the student but is not easily drawn off-task and appoint that student as a ‘helper peer’. Meet privately with the student and the helper peer. Tell the peer that whenever he or she notices that the student's verbal or motor behavior has risen to the level of distracting others, the peer should give the student a brief, quiet, non-judgmental signal (e.g., a light tap on the shoulder) to control the behavior. Role-play several scenarios so that the peer knows when he or she can ignore the student's low-level motor behaviors and when the peer should use a signal to alert the student to more distracting behaviors.

Structure Instructional Activities to Allow Interaction and Movement (DuPaul & Stoner, 2002; Sprick, Borgmeier & Nolet, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Students with high energy levels may be more likely to engage in distracting behavior when they are forced to sit through long periods of lecture or independent seatwork. Instead, offer students frequent opportunities for more movement by designing instruction to actively engage them as learners (e.g., cooperative learning). An additional advantage of less formal, more spontaneous learning activities is that when the overactive child does happen to display motor behaviors in this relaxed setting, those behaviors are less likely to distract peers.

Use ‘Response Cost’ (DuPaul & Stoner, 2002; Martens & Meller, 1990). A strategy to reduce distracting verbal or motor behaviors is to use ‘response cost’: first awarding points or tokens and then deducting those points or tokens whenever the behavior distracts other students. Here is a simple version that you can use in your classroom: Award the student a certain number of 'behavior points' (e.g., 5) at the start of each class period and write a series of tally marks on the blackboard that corresponds to this number. Privately inform the student that each time he or she engages in verbal or motor behaviors that obviously distract other students (e.g., cause them to comment on the behavior), you will silently go to the board and erase one point from the student's total. At the end of each class period, the student is allowed to keep any 'behavior points' that remain. Let the student know that he or she can collect points across multiple days and eventually redeem a certain number of collected 'behavior points' for prizes or privileges (e.g., extra free time).

Use Brief Reminders About Appropriate Behavior and Conduct (DuPaul & Stoner, 2002; Sprick, Borgmeier & Nolet, 2002). Provide students with brief reminders of expected behaviors at the ‘point of performance’, when they will most benefit from it. Consider using structured prompts such as the following for students who tend to blurt out answers: “When I ask this question, I will give the class 10 seconds to think of your best answer. Then I will call on one student.” Or you can remind students who have difficulty moving through hallways as part of a group, “Remember to keep hands to self and to walk quietly on the right as we walk to art class.”

References


Students who are defiant or non-compliant can be among the most challenging to teach. They can frequently interrupt instruction, often do poorly academically, and may show little motivation to learn. There are no magic strategies for managing the behaviors of defiant students. However, research shows that certain techniques tend to work best with these children and youth: (1) Give the student positive teacher recognition. Even actions as simple as greeting the student daily at the classroom door or stopping by the student’s desk to ask ‘How are you doing?’ can over time turn strained relationships into positive ones. (2) Monitor the classroom frequently and intervene proactively to redirect off-task students before their mild misbehaviors escalate into more serious problems. (3) Avoid saying or doing things that are likely to anger or set off a student. Speak calmly and respectfully, for example, rather than raising your voice or using sarcasm. (4) When you must intervene with a misbehaving student, convey the message to the student that you will not tolerate the problem behavior—but that you continue to value and accept the student. (5) Remember that the ultimate goal of any disciplinary measure is to teach the student more positive ways of behaving. Punishment generally does not improve student behaviors over the long term and can have significant and lasting negative effects on school performance and motivation. (6) Develop a classroom crisis response plan to be implemented in the event that one or more students display aggressive behaviors that threaten their own safety or the safety of others. Be sure that your administrator approves this classroom crisis plan and that everyone who has a part in the plan knows his or her role. One final thought: While you can never predict what behaviors your students might bring into your classroom, you will usually achieve the best outcomes by remaining calm, following pre-planned intervention strategies for misbehavior, and acting with consistency and fairness when intervening with or disciplining students. Here are other ideas for managing defiant or non-compliant students:

**Allow the Student a 'Cool-Down' Break** *(Long, Morse, & Newman, 1980)*. Select a corner of the room (or area outside the classroom with adult supervision) where the target student can take a brief ‘respite break’ whenever he or she feels angry or upset. Be sure to make cool-down breaks available to all students in the classroom, to avoid singling out only those children with anger-control issues. Whenever a student becomes upset and defiant, offer to talk the situation over with that student once he or she has calmed down and then direct the student to the cool-down corner. (E.g., "Thomas, I want to talk with you about what is upsetting you, but first you need to calm down. Take five minutes in the cool-down corner and then come over to my desk so we can talk.")

**Ask Open-Ended Questions** *(Laneoley, 2001)*. If a teacher who is faced with a confrontational student does not know what triggered that student’s defiant response, the instructor can ask neutral, open-ended questions to collect more information before responding. You can pose ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’, and ‘how’ questions to more fully understand the problem situation and identify possible solutions. Some sample questions are "What do you think made you angry when you were talking with Billy?" and "Where were you when you realized that you had..."
misplaced your science book?” One caution: Avoid asking ‘why”questions (e.g., “Why did you get into that fight with Jerry?”) because they can imply that you are blaming the student.

Assign a Reflective ‘Processing’ Essay After Misbehavior (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Mayer & Ybarra, 2004; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). The student who gets into a conflict must write and submit to the teacher a brief ‘process’ plan outlining how they will improve their behavior. At minimum, the plan would state: (1) the role the student played in the conflict, (2) the part that other participants may have taken in the incident, (3) the student’s suggestions for finding the best resolution to the problem, and (4) how the student can act in the future to prevent the conflict from recurring. NOTE: Some teachers use a pre-printed structured questionnaire containing these 4 items for the student to complete.

Do Not Get Entangled in Arguments (Walker & Walker, 1991). The careful teacher avoids being dragged into arguments or unnecessary discussion when disciplining students. When you must deliver a command to, confront, or discipline a student who is defiant or confrontational, be careful not to get ‘hooked’ into a discussion or argument with that student. If you find yourself being drawn into an exchange with the student (e.g., raising your voice, reprimanding the student), immediately use strategies to disengage yourself (e.g., by moving away from the student, repeating your request in a business-like tone of voice, imposing a pre-determined consequence for noncompliance).

Emphasize the Positive in Teacher Requests (Braithwaite, 2001). When an instructor’s request has a positive ‘spin’, that teacher is less likely to trigger a power struggle and more likely to gain student compliance. Whenever possible, avoid using negative phrasing (e.g., ”If you don’t return to your seat, I can’t help you with your assignment”). Instead, restate requests in positive terms (e.g., ”I will be over to help you on the assignment just as soon as you return to your seat”).

Expand the Range of Classroom Behavior Interventions (Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002). The teacher who has developed an array of in-class consequences for minor misbehaviors can prevent students from being sent to the principal’s office or to in-school detention. First, list those common misbehaviors that you believe should typically be handled in the classroom (e.g. being late to class, talking out). When finished, categorize your list of misbehaviors into 3 groups: ‘Level 1’ (mild) misbehaviors, ‘Level 2’ (medium) misbehaviors, and ‘Level 3’ (more serious) misbehaviors. Then, list next to each level of problem behaviors a range of in-class consequences that you feel appropriately match those types of misbehavior. For example, you may decide that a ‘soft’ reprimand would be a choice to address Level 1 misbehaviors, while a phone call to the parent would be a choice for Level 3 misbehaviors. NOTE: In-class consequences are intended for minor misbehaviors. You should notify an administrator whenever students display behaviors that seriously disrupt learning or pose a risk to the safety of that student or to others.

Give Praise That is Specific and Does Not Embarrass the Student (Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002). Defiant students can respond well to adult praise but only when it is sincere and specific, and is not embarrassing. Ideally, the teacher should deliver praise as soon as possible after the positive behavior. Praise should be specific and descriptive—because vague, general praise can sound fake and does not give the student any useful information about how their behavior meets or exceeds the teacher’s expectations. For older students who tend to dislike being praised in a highly public manner, the teacher can use a more indirect or low-key approach (e.g., writing a note of praise on the student’s graded assignment, praising the student in a private conversation, calling the student’s parent to praise the student).

Give Problem Students Frequent Positive Attention (Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002). Teachers should make an effort to give positive attention or praise to problem students at least three times more frequently than they reprimand them. The teacher gives the student the attention or praise during moments when that student is acting appropriately—and keeps track of how frequently they
give positive attention and reprimands to the student. This heavy dosing of positive attention and praise can greatly improve the teacher’s relationship with problem students.

**Have the Student Participate in Creating a Behavior Plan** (Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). Students can feel a greater sense of ownership when they are invited to contribute to their behavior management plan. Students also tend to know better than anyone else what triggers will set off their problem behaviors and what strategies they find most effective in calming themselves and avoiding conflicts or other behavioral problems.

**Increase 'Reinforcement' Quality of the Classroom** (Dunlap & Kern, 1996; Mayer & Ybarra, 2004). If a student appears to be defiant or non-compliant in an effort to escape the classroom, the logical solution is to make the classroom environment and activities more attractive and reinforcing for that student. Unfortunately, the student who fails repeatedly at academics can quickly come to view school as punishment. Some ideas to increase motivation to remain in the classroom are to structure lessons or assignments around topics of high interest to the target student, to increase opportunities for cooperative learning (which many students find reinforcing), and to adjust the target student’s instruction so that he or she experiences a high rate of success on classwork and homework.

**Keep Responses Calm, Brief, and Businesslike** (Mayer, 2000; Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002). Because teacher sarcasm or lengthy negative reprimands can trigger defiant student behavior, instructors should respond to the student in a 'neutral', business-like, calm voice. Also, keep responses brief when addressing the non-compliant student. Short teacher responses give the defiant student less control over the interaction and can also prevent instructors from inadvertently 'rewarding' misbehaving students with lots of negative adult attention.

**Listen Actively** (Lanceley, 1999; Long, Morse, & Newman, 1980). The teacher demonstrates a sincere desire to understand a student’s concerns when he or she actively listens to and then summarizes those concerns. Many students lack effective negotiation skills in dealing with adults. As a result, these students may become angry and defensive when they try to express a complaint to the teacher—even when that complaint is well founded. The instructor can show that he or she wants to understand the student's concern by summing up the crucial points of that concern (paraphrasing) in his or her own words. Examples of paraphrase comments include 'Let me be sure that I understand you correctly…', 'Are you telling me that…?', 'It sounds to me like these are your concerns:….' When teachers engage in 'active listening' by using paraphrasing, they demonstrate a respect for the student's point of view and can also improve their own understanding of the student's problem.

**Offer the Student a Face-Saving Out** (Thompson & Jenkins, 1993). Students sometimes blunder into potential confrontations with their teachers; when this happens, the teacher helps the student to avoid a full-blown conflict in a manner that allows the student to save face. Try this face-saving de-escalation tactic: Ask the defiant student, "Is there anything that we can work out together so that you can stay in the classroom and be successful?" Such a statement treats the student with dignity, models negotiation as a positive means for resolving conflict, and demonstrates that the instructor wants to keep the student in the classroom. It also provides the student with a final chance to resolve the conflict with the teacher and avoid other, more serious disciplinary consequences. Be prepared for the possibility that the student will initially give a sarcastic or unrealistic response (e.g., "Yeah, you can leave me alone and stop trying to get me to do classwork!"). Ignore such attempts to hook you into a power struggle and simply ask again whether there is any reasonable way to engage the student's cooperation. When asked a second time, students will often come up with workable ideas for resolving the problem. If the student continues to be non-compliant, however, simply impose the appropriate consequences for that misbehavior.
Proactively Interrupt the Student’s Anger Early in the Escalation Cycle (Long, Morse, & Newman, 1980; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). The teacher may be able to ‘interrupt’ a student's escalating behaviors by redirecting that student's attention or temporarily removing the student from the setting. If the student is showing only low-level defiant or non-compliant behavior, you might try engaging the student in a high-interest activity such as playing play an educational computer game or acting as a classroom helper. Or you may want to briefly remove the student from the room (‘antiseptic bounce’) to prevent the student's behavior from escalating into a full-fledged confrontation. For example, you might send the student to the main office on an errand, with the expectation that-by the time the child returns to the classroom-he or she will have calmed down.

Project Calmness When Approaching an Escalating Student (Long, Morse, & Newman, 1980; Mayer, 2000; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). A teacher’s chances of defusing a potential confrontation with an angry or defiant student increase greatly if the instructor carefully controls his or her behavior when first approaching the student. Here are important tips: Move toward the student at a slow, deliberate pace, and respect the student’s private space by maintaining a reasonable distance. If possible, speak privately to the student, using a calm and respectful voice. Avoid body language that might provoke the student, such as staring, hands on hips, or finger pointing. Keep your comments brief. If the student’s negative behaviors escalate despite your best efforts, move away from the student and seek additional adult assistance or initiate a crisis-response plan.

Relax Before Responding (Braithwaite, 2001). Educators can maintain self-control during a tense classroom situation by using a brief, simple stress-reduction technique before responding to a student’s provocative remark or behavior. When provoked, for example, take a deeper-than-normal breath and release it slowly, or mentally count to 10. As an added benefit, this strategy of conscious relaxation allows the educator an additional moment to think through an appropriate response—rather than simply reacting to the student's behavior.

Reward Alternative (Positive) Behaviors (Mayer & Ybarra, 2004; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). The instructor can shape positive behaviors by selectively calling on the student or providing other positive attention or incentives only when the student is showing appropriate social and academic behaviors. The teacher withholds positive attention or incentives when the student misbehaves or does not engage in academics.

State Teacher Directives as Two-Part Choice Statements (Walker, 1997). When a student's confrontational behavior seems driven by a need for control, the teacher can structure verbal requests to both acknowledge the student’s freedom to choose whether to comply and present the logical consequences for non-compliance (e.g., poor grades, office disciplinary referral, etc.). Frame requests to uncooperative students as a two-part statement. First, present the negative, or non-compliant, choice and its consequences (e.g., if a seatwork assignment is not completed in class, the student must stay after school). Then state the positive behavioral choice that you would like the student to select (e.g., the student can complete the seatwork assignment within the allotted work time and not stay after school). Here is a sample 2-part choice statement, ‘John, you can stay after school to finish the class assignment or you can finish the assignment now and not have to stay after class. It is your choice.’

Use a ‘Buddy Teacher’ for Brief Student Breaks (Boynton & Boynton, 2005). Sending a mildly non-compliant student on a short visit to a neighboring classroom can give both the teacher and student a needed break. Arrange with an instructor in a nearby room for either of you to send a student to the other’s room whenever you need a short respite from the student. Set aside a seating area in each classroom for student visitors. NOTE: These timeouts should be used only sparingly and should NOT be used if the student appears to find the breaks rewarding or to seek them as a way to avoid work.

Use Non-Verbal and Para-Verbal Behaviors to Defuse Potential Confrontations (Braithwaite, 2001; Long, Morse, & Newman, 1980; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). When interacting with defiant or
confrontational students, teachers can use non-verbal and para-verbal techniques such as non-threatening body language, soft tone of voice, or strategic pauses during speech, to reduce tensions. For example, if a student is visibly agitated, you may decide to sit down next to the student at eye level (a less threatening posture) rather than standing over that student. Or you might insert a very brief ‘wait time’ before each response to the student, as these micro-pauses tend to signal calmness, slow a conversation down and help to prevent it from escalating into an argument.

**Use ‘Soft’ Reprimands** *(Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002)*. The teacher gives a brief, gentle signal to direct back to task any students who is just beginning to show signs of misbehavior or non-compliance. These ‘soft’ reprimands can be verbal (a quiet word to the student) or non-verbal (a significant look). If a soft reprimand is not sufficient to curb the student’s behaviors, the teacher may pull the student aside for a private problem-solving conversation or implement appropriate disciplinary consequences.

**Validate the Student’s Emotion by Acknowledging It** *(Lanceley, 1999)*. When the teacher observes that a student seems angry or upset, the instructor labels the emotion that seems to be driving that student’s behavior. ‘Emotion labeling’ can be a helpful tactic in deescalating classroom confrontations because it prompts the student to acknowledge his or her current feeling-state directly rather than continuing to communicate it indirectly through acting-out behavior. A teacher, for example, who observes a student slamming her books down on her desk and muttering to herself after returning from gym class might say to the student, “You seem angry. Could you tell me what is wrong?” Once a powerful emotion such as anger is labeled, the teacher and student can then talk about it, figure out what may have triggered it, and jointly find solutions that will mitigate it. Emotion labeling should generally be done in a tentative manner (“John, you sound nervous…”, “Alice, you appear frustrated…”), since one can never know with complete certainty what feelings another person is experiencing.

**References**


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The act of writing contains its own inner tensions. Writers must abide by a host of rules that govern the mechanics and conventions of writing yet are also expected—within the constraints of those rules—to formulate original, even creative, thoughts. It is no wonder that many students find writing to be a baffling exercise and have little sense of how to break larger writing assignments into predictable, achievable subtasks. But of course writing can be taught and writing can be mastered. The best writing instruction places the process of written expression on a timeline: Good writers first plan their writing. Then they write. Once a draft has been created, good writers review and revise their work. While the stages of the writing process are generally sequential, good writers also find themselves jumping frequently between these stages (for example, collecting additional notes and writing new sections of a paper as part of the revision process). Depending upon their stage of development as writers, struggling student writers may benefit from the following strategies:

**Content: Memorize a Story Grammar Checklist** *(Reid & Lienemann, 2006)*. Students write lengthier stories that include greater detail when they use a memorized strategy to judge their writing-in-progress. These young writers are taught a simple mnemonic device with 7 elements: ‘WWW, What=2, How = 2.’ This mnemonic translates into a story grammar checklist: WHO the main character is; WHERE the story takes place; WHEN the story occurs; WHAT the main character(s) do or plan to do; WHAT happens next;HOW the story concludes; and HOW the character(s) feel about their experiences. Students are taught this strategy through teacher demonstration, discussion, teacher modeling; and student use of the strategy with gradually fading teacher support. When students use the ‘WWW, What=2, How = 2’ tactic independently, they may still need occasional prompting to use it in their writing. NOTE: Teachers can apply this intervention idea to any genre of writing (e.g., persuasive essay), distilling its essential elements into a similar short, easily memorized checklist to teach to students.

**Fluency: Have Students Write Every Day** *(Graham, Harris & Larsen, 2001)*. Short daily writing assignments can build student writing fluency and make writing a more motivating activity. For struggling writers, formal writing can feel much like a foreign language, with its own set of obscure grammatical rules and intimidating vocabulary. Just as people learn another language more quickly and gain confidence when they use it frequently, however, poor writers gradually develop into better writers when they are prompted to write daily—and receive rapid feedback and encouragement about that writing. The teacher can encourage daily writing by giving short writing assignments, allowing time for students to journal about their learning activities, requiring that they correspond daily with pen pals via email, or even posting a question on the board as a bell-ringer activity that students can respond to in writing for extra credit. Short daily writing tasks have the potential to lower students’ aversion to writing and boost their confidence in using the written word.

**Fluency: Self-Monitor and Graph Results to Increase Writing Fluency** *(Rathvon, 1999)*. Students gain motivation to write through daily monitoring and charting of their own and classwide rates of writing fluency. At least several times per week, assign your students timed periods of ‘freewriting’ when they write in their personal journals. Freewriting periods all the same amount of time each
day. After each freewriting period, direct each student to count up the number of words he or she has written in the daily journal entry (whether spelled correctly or not). Next, tell students to record their personal writing-fluency score in their journal and also chart the score on their own time-series graph for visual feedback. Then collect the day’s writing-fluency scores of all students in the class, sum those scores, and chart the results on a large time-series graph posted at the front of the room. At the start of each week, calculate that week’s goal of increasing total class words written by taking last week’s score and increasing by five percent. At the end of each week, review the class score and praise students if they have shown good effort.

**Instruction: Essentials of Good Teaching Benefit Struggling Writers** (Gersten, Baker, & Edwards, 1999). Teachers are most successful in reaching students with writing delays when their instruction emphasizes the full writing process, provides strategy sheets, offers lots of models of good writing, and gives students timely editorial feedback. Good instructors build their written expression lessons around the 3 stages of writing—planning, writing, and revision—and make those stages clear and explicit. Skilled instructors also provide students with ‘think sheets’ that outline step-by-step strategies for tackling the different phases of a writing assignment (e.g., taking concise notes from research material; building an outline; proofreading a draft). Students become stronger writers when exposed to different kinds of expressive text, such as persuasive, narrative, and expository writing. Teachers can make students more confident and self-sufficient as writers when they give them access to plentiful examples of good prose models that the student can review when completing a writing assignment. Finally, strong writing teachers provide supportive and timely feedback to students about their writing. When teachers or classmates offer writing feedback to the student, they are honest but also maintain an encouraging tone.

**Motivation: Stimulate Interest With an Autobiography Assignment** (Bos & Vaughn, 2002). Assigning the class to write their own autobiographies can motivate hard-to-reach students who seem uninterested in most writing assignments. Have students read a series of autobiographies of people who interest them. Discuss these biographies with the class. Then assign students to write their own autobiographies. (With the class, create a short questionnaire that students can use to interview their parents and other family members to collect information about their past.) Allow students to read their finished autobiographies for the class.

**Organization: Build an Outline by Talking Through the Topic** (The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, n.d./23 December 2006). Students who struggle to organize their notes into a coherent outline can tell others what they know about the topic—and then capture the informal logical structure of that conversation to create a working outline. The student studies notes from the topic and describes what he or she knows about the topic and its significance to a listener. (The student may want to audio-record this conversation for later playback.) After the conversation, the student jots down an outline from memory to capture the structure and main ideas of the discussion. This outline ‘kernel’ can then be expanded and refined into the framework for a paper.

**Organization: ‘Reverse Outline’ the Draft** (The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, n.d./23 December 2006). Students can improve the internal flow of their compositions through ‘reverse outlining’. The student writes a draft of the composition. Next, the student reads through the draft, jotting notes in the margins that signify the main idea of each paragraph or section. Then the student organizes the margin notes into an outline to reveal the organizational structure of the paper. This ‘reverse outline’ allows the student to note whether sections of the draft are repetitious, are out of order, or do not logically connect with one another.

**Planning: Brainstorm to Break the ‘Idea’ Logjam** (The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, n.d./28 December 2006). Brainstorming is a time-tested method that can help students to generate motivating topics for writing assignments and uncover new ideas to expand and improve their compositions. Here are four brainstorming strategies to teach to students: **FREEWRITING**: The student sets a time limit (e.g., 15 minutes) or length limit (e.g., one hand-written page) and
spontaneously writes until the limit is reached. The writer does not judge the writing but simply writes as rapidly as possible, capturing any thought that comes to mind on the topic. Later, the student reviews the freewriting to pick out any ideas, terms, or phrasing that might be incorporated into the writing assignment. LISTING: The student selects a topic based on an idea or key term related to the writing assignment. The writer then rapidly brainstorms a list of any items that might possibly relate to the topic. Finally, the writer reviews the list to select items that might be useful in the assigned composition or trigger additional writing ideas. SIMILES: The student selects a series of key terms or concepts linked to the writing assignment. The student brainstorms, using the framework of a simile: "_1_ is like _2_." The student plugs a key term into the first blank and then generates as many similes as possible (e.g., "A SHIP is like a CITY ON THE SEA."). REFERENCES: The student jots down key ideas or terms from the writing assignment. He or she then browses through various reference works (dictionaries, encyclopedias, specialized reference works on specific subjects) looking randomly for entries that trigger useful ideas. (Writers might try a variation of this strategy by typing assignment-related search terms into GOOGLE or another online search engine.)

Proofreading: Teach A Memory Strategy (Bos & Vaughn, 2002). When students regularly use a simple, portable, easily memorized plan for proofreading, the quality of their writing can improve significantly. Create a poster to be put up in the classroom summarizing the SCOPE proofreading elements: (1) SPELLING: Are my words spelled correctly; (2) CAPITALIZATION: Have I capitalized all appropriate words, including first words of sentences, proper nouns, and proper names?; (3) ORDER of words: Is my word order (syntax) correct?; (4) PUNCTUATION: Did I use end punctuation and other punctuation marks appropriately? (5) EXPRESSION of complete thoughts: Do all of my sentences contain a noun and verb to convey a complete thought? Review the SCOPE proofreading steps by copying a first-draft writing sample onto an overhead and evaluating the sample with the class using each item from the SCOPE poster. Then direct students to pair off and together evaluate their own writing samples using SCOPE. When students appear to understand the use of the SCOPE plan, require that they use this strategy to proofread all written assignments before turning them in.

Proofreading: Use Selective Proofreading With Highlighting of Errors (Frus, n.d./18 November 2006). To prevent struggling writers from becoming overwhelmed by teacher proofreading corrections, focus on only 1 or 2 proofreading areas when correcting a writing assignment. Create a student ‘writing skills checklist’ that inventories key writing competencies (e.g., grammar/syntax, spelling, vocabulary, etc.). For each writing assignment, announce to students that you will grade the assignment for overall content but will make proofreading corrections on only 1-2 areas chosen from the writing skills checklist. (Select different proofreading targets for each assignment matched to common writing weaknesses in your classroom.) Also, to prevent cluttering the student’s paper with potentially discouraging teacher comments and editing marks, underline problems in the student’ text with a highlighter and number the highlighted errors sequentially at the left margin of the student paper. Then (if necessary) write teacher comments on a separate feedback sheet to explain the writing errors. (Identify each comment with the matching error-number from the left margin of the student’s worksheet.) With fewer proofreading comments, the student can better attend to the teacher feedback. Also, even a heavily edited student assignment looks neat and tidy when teachers use the highlighting/numbering technique—preventing students from becoming disheartened at the site of an assignment scribbled over with corrective comments.

Spelling: Leverage the Power of Memory Through Cover-Copy-Compare (Murphy, Hem, Williams, & McLaughlin, 1990). Students increase their spelling knowledge by copying a spelling word from a correct model and then recopying the same word from memory. Give students a list of 10-20 spelling words, an index card, and a blank sheet of paper. For each word on the spelling list, the student (1) copies the spelling list item onto a sheet of paper, (2) covers the newly copied word with the index card, (3) writes the spelling word again on the sheet (spelling it from memory), and (4) uncovers the copied word and checks to ensure that the word copied from memory is spelled
correctly. If that word is spelled incorrectly, the student repeats the sequence above until the word copied from memory is spelled correctly--then moves to the next word on the spelling list.

References


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Evaluating the Intervention Plan of the ‘Non-Responding’ Student: A Guide

Directions: If your RTI Team has a student who is not adequately responding to intervention, use the form below as an organizing tool to evaluate the quality and outcome of the intervention plan(s) attempted. If the student meets all criteria outlined below (see ‘Recommendation’ sections) and continues to show significant school-based problems, your team should consider referring him or her for a special education evaluation.

1. Target Problems. The student was initially found to have skill or performance gaps relative to peers that significantly affected his or her chances for school success in the following area(s):

   Problem definition 1: _________________________________________________________________
   Problem definition 2: _________________________________________________________________

   Your team agreed that these problem definitions were stated in clear, measurable, observable terms. ___Y ___N
   [Recommendation: If ‘No’, refer the student back to the RTI Team and define more precisely the problem area(s).]

2. Intervention Plan Elements.
   • Interventions used with the student were research-based. ___Y ___N
   • All interventions were carried out as designed with a high level of quality 'intervention follow-through'. ___Y ___N
   [Recommendation: If ‘No’ to either of the items, put interventions in place for the student that are research-based and monitor them closely to ensure quality of intervention follow-through]

3. Number of Intervention Plans Tried and Time-Lines. A minimum of 2 or more intervention plans was attempted. Each plan was implemented for a long enough period of time to demonstrate whether it was effective. ___Y ___N

   • Plan 1: Start Date: ___/___/___ End Date: ___/___/___ Number of Instructional Weeks: _____
     Comments: _____________________________________________________________________

   • Plan 2: Start Date: ___/___/___ End Date: ___/___/___ Number of Instructional Weeks: _____
     Comments: _____________________________________________________________________

   • Plan 3: Start Date: ___/___/___ End Date: ___/___/___ Number of Instructional Weeks: _____
     Comments: _____________________________________________________________________

   • Plan 4: Start Date: ___/___/___ End Date: ___/___/___ Number of Instructional Weeks: _____
     Comments: _____________________________________________________________________
   [Recommendation: If fewer than 2 intervention plans have been attempted, continue to monitor the student through the RTI Team and try additional interventions as needed. If any of the plans were implemented for too short a time to show progress, consider employing the same intervention plan again and monitor long enough to judge its effectiveness.]
4. **Progress Monitoring.** The student’s progress was monitored regularly in each of the problem areas identified in Section 1. At least two measures were used to track student progress in each problem area. ___Y ___N

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem definition #</th>
<th>Measurement method used:</th>
<th>Goal set for student:</th>
<th>Final student level:</th>
<th>Goal met?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>_________________________</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>___Y ___N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>_________________________</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>___Y ___N</td>
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<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>_________________________</td>
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<td>______________</td>
<td>___Y ___N</td>
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<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>_________________________</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>___Y ___N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Recommendation: If fewer than 2 methods were used to monitor a problem area, select additional monitoring methods and continue the intervention for several more weeks before making a decision about the student’s response to intervention. If the student met **most or all** monitoring goals, consider maintaining the current intervention plan, raising the student’s goals, and continuing to monitor the student’s progress.]
Student Learning Survey

Student Name: _________________________ Classroom: ________________ Date: __________

Directions: Please complete this survey to give your teacher information about how you learn best. If you are not sure what to put for an answer, just write down your ‘best guess’.

1. What do you prefer to be called by your teacher? ______________________________

2. When is your birthday? ____________________________________________________

3. What is your most favorite subject or school activity? _________________________

4. What is your least favorite subject or school activity? _________________________

5. Do you like working in groups or alone on projects? State your reason(s) why:
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

6. Organizational skills include having all of your work materials on hand in the classroom, using your work time well, and getting work assignments done and handed in on time. On a rating scale from 1 (the lowest rating) to 10 (the highest rating), how would you rate your organizational skills?
   1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
   Not organized at all     Very organized

7. Describe your idea of the perfect classroom. What would it look like?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

8. What are your favorite ways to learn? (Pick as many as you like)
   ___ Listening to lectures   ___ Working with a friend   ___ Working as part of a group
   ___ Listening to a taped book   ___ Watching an educational video   ___ Doing research in libraries
   ___ Doing research on the Internet   ___ Doing homework   ___ Other: ________________
9. Write two words that best describe you:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

10. What are your favorite games, activities, sports, hobbies, or other interests?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

11. What are your favorite TV shows or movies?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

12. Describe how you study or review for a test:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

13. Occasionally, students can earn rewards in the class for working hard and turning in completed work. What would be some good rewards or privileges you would like to be able to earn in this classroom? (Be realistic!):
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Schoolwork Motivation Assessment
(adapted from Witt & Beck, 1999; Witt, VanDerHeyden & Gilbertson, 2004)

Student: ______________________________   Teacher/Classroom: _______________________
Date of Assessment: ___/___/___    Person Completing Assessment: _______________________

Step 1: Assemble an incentive menu. Create a 4-5 item menu of modest incentives or rewards that students in the class are most likely to find motivating. Examples of popular incentives include:
- small prizes such as pencils or stickers,
- 5 minutes of extra free time,
- an opportunity to play a computer game,
- praise note or positive phone call to parent

Incentive / Reward Menu
Idea 1: _________________________
Idea 2: _________________________
Idea 3: _________________________
Idea 4: _________________________
Idea 5: _________________________

Step 2: Create two versions of a CBM probe or timed worksheet. Make up two versions of a structured, timed worksheet with items of the type that the student appears to find challenging. Use one of the options below:

Option 1: Create Curriculum-Based Measurement probes. The probes should be at the same level of difficulty, but each probe should have different items or content to avoid a practice effect. NOTE: CBM probes in oral reading fluency, math computation, writing, and spelling can all be used.

Option 2: Make up two versions of custom student worksheets. The worksheets should be at the same level of difficulty, but each worksheet should have different items or content to avoid a practice effect. NOTE: If possible, the worksheets should contain standardized short-answer items (e.g., matching vocabulary words to their definitions) to allow you to calculate the student’s rate of work completion.

Step 3: Administer the first CBM probe or timed worksheet to the student WITHOUT incentives. In a quiet, non-distracting location, administer the first worksheet or CBM probe under timed, standardized conditions. Collect the probe or worksheet and score.

Step 4: Compute an improvement goal. After you have scored the first CBM probe or worksheet, compute a ‘20 percent improvement goal’. Multiply the student’s score on the worksheet by 1.2. This product represents the student’s minimum goal for improvement.

Student Score on First CBM Probe or Worksheet
Multiplied by:  1.2
Yields an improvement goal of:
Step 5: Have the student select an incentive for improved performance. Tell the student that if he or she can attain a score on the second worksheet that meets or exceeds your goal for improvement (Step 3), the student can earn an incentive. Show the student the reward menu. Ask the student to select the incentive that he or she will earn if the student makes or exceeds the goal.

Step 6: Administer the second timed worksheet to the student WITH incentives. Give the student the second CBM probe. Collect and score. If the student meets or exceeds the pre-set improvement goal, award the student the incentive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Score on Second CBM Probe or Worksheet</th>
<th>Improvement goal of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Step 7: Interpret the results of the academic motivation assessment to select appropriate interventions. Use the decision-rules below to determine recommended type(s) of intervention:

- **ACADEMIC INTERVENTIONS ONLY.** If the student fails to meet or exceed the improvement goal, an academic intervention should be selected to teach the appropriate skills or to provide the student with drill and practice opportunities to build fluency in the targeted academic area(s).

- **COMBINED ACADEMIC AND PERFORMANCE INTERVENTIONS.** If the student meets or exceeds the improvement goal but continues to function significantly below the level of classmates, an intervention should be tailored that includes strategies to both improve academic performance and to increase the student's work motivation. The academic portion of the intervention should teach the appropriate skills or to provide the student with drill and practice opportunities to build fluency in the targeted academic area(s). Ideas for performance interventions include (a) providing the student with incentives or ‘pay-offs’ for participation and/or (b) structuring academic lessons around topics or functional outcomes valued by the student.

- **PERFORMANCE INTERVENTIONS ONLY.** If the student meets or exceeds the improvement goal with an incentive and shows academic skills that fall within the range of ‘typical’ classmates, the intervention should target only student work performance or motivation. Ideas for performance interventions include (a) providing the student with incentives or ‘pay-offs’ for participation and/or (b) structuring academic lessons around topics or functional outcomes valued by the student.

References:


Intervention Intensity Rating Form

**Directions:** The *Intervention Intensity Rating Form* provides an informal estimate of the resources and effort required to carry out a particular intervention. Tier I interventions are universally available to all students in a classroom or school. Tier II interventions are tailored to the unique needs of students who display academic or behavioral deficits and who have not responded to the supports available to all students. Tier III interventions are the most intensive supports available in a school setting. For each of the intervention elements below, check the box in the Tier I, II, or III column that best matches the specific intervention you are rating. (If you are unsure of a rating, make your best guess.) Count up the checks in each column.

Guidelines for Interpreting Results. If 7 or more of your ratings on this 10-item form fall under any single Tier, it is likely that the intervention has a level of intensity matching that Tier as well. An intervention with 8 checks under the Tier II column, for example, should be considered a Tier II intervention. If you have a mixed pattern of ratings—with no single column containing 7 or more checks—count up the number of checks in each column. The intervention should be considered equivalent in intensity to the highest column that contains 3 or more checks. (Tier I is the lowest column. Tier III is the highest.) An intervention with more than 3 checks under the Tier III column, for example, would be considered a Tier III intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention Element</th>
<th>Tier I</th>
<th>Tier II</th>
<th>Tier III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of the Intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Certification or other formal credentials required to qualify person(s) to implement the intervention</td>
<td>□ No certification or specialized credentials required</td>
<td>□ Certification or specialized credentials required (e.g., Reading Specialist, School Psychologist) but commonly available in school setting</td>
<td>□ Certification or specialized credentials required: in highly specialized area or in form of advanced degree (e.g., Ph.D.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. On a per-pupil basis, the cost to purchase or effort needed to create intervention materials</td>
<td>□ Intervention materials not needed or do not entail significant expense or effort</td>
<td>□ Intervention materials required but can be obtained at a modest cost or with reasonable effort</td>
<td>□ Intervention materials per pupil are costly or require substantial effort to create</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Initial training required to use the intervention</td>
<td>□ Little or no training needed</td>
<td>□ Modest amount of training (1 or 2 sessions) needed</td>
<td>□ Significant training (more than 2 sessions) required for training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of the Intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Amount of preparation required for each session of the intervention</td>
<td>□ Little or no preparation is needed</td>
<td>□ Some preparation is needed (up to 15 minutes per session)</td>
<td>□ Substantial preparation is needed (more than 15 minutes per session)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Average time needed each session to implement the intervention</td>
<td>□ Little or no extra time is needed</td>
<td>□ Some time is needed (up to 30 minutes per session)</td>
<td>□ Substantial time is needed (more than 30 minutes per session)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Element</td>
<td>Tier I</td>
<td>Tier II</td>
<td>Tier III</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Degree to which the intervention is tailored to the unique needs of the target student</td>
<td>☐ Intervention is likely to be effective with a wide range of students (e.g., use of praise statements)</td>
<td>☐ Intervention is tailored to the target student but could also be applied to other students who show similar, somewhat common presenting problems (e.g., poor reading fluency; inattention)</td>
<td>☐ Intervention is highly individualized to the needs of the target student, unlikely to be applicable to many other students in the class or school (e.g., middle school student requiring early-elementary level reading instruction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Degree to which the intervention can be carried out by the educator as part of his or her ‘typical’ instructional routine</td>
<td>☐ Intervention can be fully integrated into the teacher’s instructional routine</td>
<td>☐ Intervention requires that the educator expend moderate amount of additional effort or time beyond the usual instructional routine</td>
<td>☐ Intervention requires that the educator expend significant additional effort or time beyond the usual instructional routine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Size of the developmental gap between the stated intervention outcome goal(s) of the target student and the ‘typical’ academic or behavioral levels of the classroom or grade level</td>
<td>☐ Intervention goal approaches or matches the academic or behavioral levels of most students at that grade level</td>
<td>☐ Intervention goal falls somewhat below the academic or behavioral levels of most students at that grade level</td>
<td>☐ Intervention goal falls significantly below the academic or behavioral levels of most students at that grade level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Potential of the intervention to distract other students or disrupt their learning</td>
<td>☐ Intervention can be implemented with little or no distraction of other students or disruption to their learning</td>
<td>☐ Intervention is likely to result in mild distraction of other students or disruption to their learning</td>
<td>☐ Intervention is likely to result in significant distraction of other students or disruption to their learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring of the Intervention</td>
<td>--</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Effort required to monitor the success of the intervention (e.g., a teacher who rates a student on a Daily Behavior Report Card would be considered ‘low effort’, a psychologist who carries out twice-weekly direct observations of student behavior would be ‘high effort’)</td>
<td>☐ Method(s) of intervention monitoring requires little additional effort</td>
<td>☐ Method(s) of intervention monitoring requires moderate additional effort</td>
<td>☐ Method(s) of intervention monitoring requires significant additional effort</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>TIER I TOTAL</th>
<th>TIER II TOTAL</th>
<th>TIER III TOTAL</th>
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The Instructional Hierarchy: Linking Stages of Learning to Effective Instructional Techniques

When mastering new academic skills or strategies, the student learner typically advances through a predictable series of learning stages. At the start, a student is usually halting and uncertain as he or she tries to use the target skill. With teacher feedback and lots of practice, the student becomes more fluent, accurate, and confident in using the skill. It can be very useful to think of these phases of learning as a hierarchy (See chart below). The learning hierarchy (Haring, Lovitt, Eaton, & Hansen, 1978) has four stages: acquisition, fluency, generalization, and adaptation:

1. **Acquisition.** The student has begun to learn how to complete the target skill correctly but is not yet accurate or fluent in the skill. The goal in this phase is to improve accuracy.
2. **Fluency.** The student is able to complete the target skill accurately but works slowly. The goal of this phase is to increase the student's speed of responding (fluency).
3. **Generalization.** The student is accurate and fluent in using the target skill but does not typically use it in different situations or settings. Or the student may confuse the target skill with 'similar' skills. The goal of this phase is to get the student to use the skill in the widest possible range of settings and situations, or to accurately discriminate between the target skill and 'similar' skills.
4. **Adaptation.** The student is accurate and fluent in using the skill. He or she also uses the skill in many situations or settings. However, the student is not yet able to modify or adapt the skill to fit novel task-demands or situations. Here the goal is for the student to be able to identify elements of previously learned skills that he or she can adapt to the new demands or situation.

When the teacher accurately identifies a student's learning stage, the instructor can select instructional ideas that are more likely to be successful because these strategies match the student's learning needs.

**Reference**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Stage</th>
<th>Student 'Look-Fors'…</th>
<th>What strategies are effective…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Acquisition:** Exit Goal: The student can perform the skill accurately with little adult support. | • Is just beginning to learn skill  
• Not yet able to perform learning task reliably or with high level of accuracy | • Teacher actively demonstrates target skill  
• Teacher uses ‘think-aloud’ strategy-- especially for thinking skills that are otherwise covert  
• Student has models of correct performance to consult as needed (e.g., correctly completed math problems on board)  
• Student gets feedback about correct performance  
• Student receives praise, encouragement for effort |
| **Fluency:** Exit Goals: The student (a) has learned skill well enough to retain (b) has learned skill well enough to combine with other skills, (c) is as fluent as peers. | • Gives accurate responses to learning task  
• Performs learning task slowly, haltingly | • Teacher structures learning activities to give student opportunity for active (observable) responding  
• Student has frequent opportunities to **drill** (direct repetition of target skill) and **practice** (blending target skill with other skills to solve problems)  
• Student gets feedback on **fluency** and **accuracy** of performance  
• Student receives praise, encouragement for **increased fluency** |
| **Generalization:** Exit Goals: The student (a) uses the skill across settings, situations; (b) does not confuse target skill with similar skills | • Is accurate and fluent in responding  
• May fail to apply skill to new situations, settings  
• May confuse target skill with similar skills (e.g., confusing ‘+’ and ‘x’ number operation signs) | • Teacher structures academic tasks to require that the student use the target skill regularly in assignments.  
• Student receives encouragement, praise, reinforcers for using skill in new settings, situations  
• If student confuses target skill with similar skill(s), the student is given practice items that force him/her to correctly discriminate between similar skills  
• Teacher works with parents to identify tasks that the student can do outside of school to practice target skill  
• Student gets periodic opportunities to review, practice target skill to ensure maintenance |
| **Adaptation:** Exit Goal: The Adaptation phase is continuous and has no exit criteria. | • Is fluent and accurate in skill  
• Applies skill in novel situations, settings without prompting  
• Does not yet modify skill as needed to fit new situations (e.g., child says ‘Thank you’ in all situations, does not use modified, equivalent phrases such as “I appreciate your help.”) | • Teacher helps student to articulate the ‘big ideas’ or core element(s) of target skill that the student can modify to face novel tasks, situations (e.g., fractions, ratios, and percentages link to the ‘big idea’ of the part in relation to the whole; ‘Thank you’ is part of a larger class of polite speech)  
• Train for adaptation: Student gets opportunities to practice the target skill with modest modifications in new situations, settings with encouragement, corrective feedback, praise, other reinforcers.  
• Encourage student to set own goals for adapting skill to new and challenging situations. |
The Learn Unit: Essential Elements of Effective Instruction

At the core of good instruction lies the 'Learn Unit', a 3-step process in which the student is invited to engage in an academic task, delivers a response, and then receives immediate feedback about how he or she did on the task (Heward, 1996). Here is an explanation of the stages of the ‘Learn Unit’:

1. Academic Opportunity to Respond. The student is presented with a meaningful opportunity to respond to academic task. A question posed by the teacher, a math word problem, and a spelling item on an educational computer ‘Word Gobbler’ game could all be considered academic opportunities to respond.

2. Active Student Response. The student answers the item, solves the problem presented, or completes the academic task. Answering the teacher’s question, computing the answer to a math word problem (and showing all work), and typing in the correct spelling of an item when playing an educational computer game are all examples of active student responding.

3. Performance Feedback. The student receives timely feedback about whether his or her response is correct—often with praise and encouragement. A teacher exclaiming ‘Right! Good job!’ when a student gives an response in class, a student using an answer key to check her answer to a math word problem, and a computer message that says ‘Congratulations! You get 2 points for correctly spelling this word!’ are all examples of corrective feedback.

The more frequently a student cycles through complete ‘Learn Unit’ trials, the faster that student is likely to make learning progress. If any one of these steps is missing, the quality of instruction will probably be compromised.

Reference
# RTI Intervention Team: Teacher Referral Form: Secondary Level

**Student:** ____________________________________  **Teacher:** ____________________________  **Date:** ___________

**Course/Subject:** ________________________________  **Number of Absences This Year:** ____________________

**Period(s) or Day(s) of Week/Time(s) When Course Meets:** _______________________________________________

## Global Skills Rating

Rate the student’s standing relative to other students in his or her class on the skills listed below. (If you are unsure of the student’s abilities on a particular skill, leave it blank.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Skills</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics Skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Expression Skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study &amp; Organizational Skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Conduct</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significantly/Severely Below Grade Level</th>
<th>Somewhat Below Grade Level</th>
<th>At Grade Level</th>
<th>Above Grade Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Test/Quiz Grades

Chart the most recent test and/or quiz grades for this student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test 1</th>
<th>Quiz 1</th>
<th>Test 2</th>
<th>Quiz 2</th>
<th>Test 3</th>
<th>Quiz 3</th>
<th>Test 4</th>
<th>Quiz 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Date:** __/__/___  **Grade:** ______  **Date:** __/__/___  **Grade:** ______  **Date:** __/__/___  **Grade:** ______  **Date:** __/__/___  **Grade:** ______

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Concerns

List up to 3 primary concerns that you have with this student in your classroom:

1. __________________________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________________________

## Strategies

List specific strategies that you have tried in the classroom to support this student in area(s) of concern.

1. __________________________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________________________________________
5. __________________________________________________________________________________________
Permanent Products: Assessing the Completion, Accuracy, and Overall Quality of Student Independent Work

There are a number of reasons that students might have difficulty in completing independent classroom assignments. School staff can use a 4-step process to collect data about the student’s independent work habits, rate of on-task behavior during class assignments, and quality and accuracy of the student’s completed work (‘permanent products’).

Step 1: Collect data on the student’s On-Task behavior during independent seatwork. Visit the student’s classroom. Observe the student working independently on a class assignment. Using the Independent Seatwork Observation Form, track the student’s rate of On-Task behavior on the assignment.

Rate of On-Task Behavior: ___________ %

Step 2: Analyze the student’s completed seatwork (permanent product).

- **Estimate the amount of the assignment completed by the student.** If the assignment contains discrete items (e.g., math computation problems), count up the number of items actually completed by the student. Divide this figure by the total number of items contained in the assignment and then multiply by 100. If the assignment cannot easily be divided into discrete units (e.g., a written essay), estimate the approximate amount of the assignment that the student completed.

Amount of assignment estimated to have been completed: ___________ %

- **Estimate the accuracy or overall quality of the work that the student completed.** If the assignment contains discrete items (e.g., math computation problems), divide the number of correct items by the number of items the student attempted (including partially completed items) and then multiply by 100.

Estimated accuracy of completed work: ___________ %

**OR**

If the assignment cannot easily be divided into discrete units (e.g., a written essay), use the simple quality rubric below to judge the overall quality of the work that the student actually completed:

*How would you judge the overall quality of the work produced by the student during independent seatwork? Circle your selection:*

1. Significantly below level of peers (rudimentary content, absence of ideas, and/or failure to use key strategies or steps)
2. Somewhat below level of peers (lacking content, inadequate development of ideas, and/or limited application of key strategies or steps)
3. At level of peers (e.g., average content, development of ideas, application of key strategies or steps)
4. Above peers in overall quality (e.g., strong content, ideas developed to an advanced degree, creative application of key strategies or steps)
**Step 3**: Compare the student's performance on the assignment to that of a 'typical' classroom peer. Ask the teacher to select an 'average' student in the class who typically completes independent work at an acceptable level of completion, accuracy and quality. Collect that student’s completed seatwork (done during the same work period as that of your target student). Analyze the peer student’s seatwork using the same standards used with the target student.

Peer Comparison: Amount of assignment estimated to have been completed: ___________ %

Peer Comparison: Estimated accuracy of completed work: ___________ %

OR

Peer Comparison: Quality Rubric Rating: 1 2 3 4

**Step 4**: Select interventions that match the ‘root cause’ of the student's problem with independent work. Pool the information that you have collected through direct observation of the student, analysis of the student’s work products, and a comparison of the student’s performance to that of peers. Then generate a hypothesis, or ‘best guess’, about why the student is having problems with seatwork.

Common reasons for student difficulties with independent work are:

- Carelessness
- Inattention
- Skill deficits
- Lack of motivation

Below are possible scenarios of student problems and sample interventions to consider for each scenario.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Scenarios</th>
<th>Sample Intervention Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| *The student completes independent work quickly with time to spare—but the work contains ‘careless’ mistakes or is of poor quality.* | • Provide the student with incentives to slow down and use the full time allocated to complete the assignment.  
• Require that the student use a quality checklist or rubric to review work before turning it in. If the student attempts to turn in completed work that does not meet teacher expectations, send the student back to his or her seat to continue to work on the assignment. |
| *The student was off-task during much of the work session. The assignment was not completed within the time allocated.* | • Use strategies to increase the student’s attention to task (e.g., teacher redirection to task, student self-monitoring of work completion). |
| *The completed assignment was of poor quality and/or contained many errors.*     | • Review with the student the skills or strategies required for the assignment.  
• Give the student correctly completed models similar to what the student must produce for the assignment. Encourage the student to refer to these models whenever he or she is ‘stuck’.  
• Approach the student in a low-key manner periodically during independent seatwork to see if the student requires assistance.  
• Provide the student an incentive (e.g., five
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional minutes of free time if the student improves the quality or accuracy of the work.</th>
<th>The student did not complete the assignment in the allotted time. However, the student demonstrated a high degree of quality and/or accuracy in his or her work.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boost the student’s speed by providing him or her with opportunities to practice the skills or strategies required for the assignment. Give the student feedback and encouragement as the student increases his or her working speed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Independent Seatwork Observation Form

Student Name: ____________________________________________ Date: ____________
Observer: ___________________________ Location: __________________________ Start Time: _________ End Time: ___________

Description of Activities: __________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________

This simple observation form is used to determine the amount of time that a student is on-task when completing an independent assignment in the classroom. It can be used for an observation of up to 15 minutes.

Directions: Observe the student at a time when the student is scheduled to be engaged in independent seatwork.

On-Task Behavior is coded using a momentary time-sampling procedure. At the start of each 15-second interval, the observer glances at the target child for approximately two seconds and determines if the child is on-task or off-task during the brief observation. If the child is found to be on-task (doing his or her assigned seatwork), the interval is marked with an "X." If the child is off-task, the interval remains unmarked. The observer then ignores this behavior category until the onset of the next time interval.

Use Table 1 below (‘Calculate the Rate of On-Task Behavior During the Observation Period’) to calculate the student’s time on task (engaged academic time).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Behavior</th>
<th>Number of intervals in which the On-Task behavior was observed</th>
<th>The TOTAL number of intervals in the observation period(s)</th>
<th>Rate (in decimal form) that the On-Task behavior occurred during the observation</th>
<th>Times 100 = Rate (in percentage form) that the On-Task behavior occurred during the observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ON-TASK</td>
<td>Divided by</td>
<td>Equals</td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student On-Task Observation Form

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________________ Date: ____________
Observer: ___________________________ Location: __________________________  Start Time: _________ End Time: ___________
Description of Activities: __________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Directions: Observe the student at a time when the student is engaged in independent seatwork or attending to large-group instruction. On-Task Behavior is the only behavior being recorded. It is coded using a momentary time-sampling procedure. At the start of each 15-second interval, glance at the target child for approximately two seconds and determine if the child is on-task or off-task during the brief observation. If the child is found to be on-task (attending to large-group instruction or doing his or her assigned seatwork), mark the interval with an "X." If the child is off-task, leave the article unmarked. Then keep running notes of any student behaviors or classroom events until til the onset of the next time interval. When the observation is finished, use Table 1 below to calculate the student’s time on task (engaged academic time).

Table 1: Calculate the Rate of On-Task Behavior During the Observation Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Behavior</th>
<th>Number of intervals in which the On-Task behavior was observed</th>
<th>The TOTAL number of intervals in the observation period(s)</th>
<th>Rate (in decimal form) that the On-Task behavior occurred during the observation</th>
<th>Rate (in percentage form) that the On-Task behavior occurred during the observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ON-TASK</td>
<td>Divided by</td>
<td>Equals</td>
<td>Times 100 = %</td>
<td>Goal: 85 % On-Task or Higher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe any notable student behaviors or other classroom events observed during the session:
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
**Student On-Task Observation Summary Form**

Student: _____________________________________  Grade: ________  School Yr: ________

Person(s) Rating: ___________________________________________________________________

**Directions:** In the Observation Chart below, plot the ON-TASK rate with an ‘X’ and note the date and start-time of ea observation. Then write summary details of each observation in the Data Table at the bottom of the page.

**OBSERVATION CHART**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Intervals ON-TASK</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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<td>100</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date: _______  Date: _______  Date: _______  Date: _______  Date: _______  Date: _______

**DATA TABLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#/Obsv</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>End Time</th>
<th>Total Minutes</th>
<th>% ON-TASK</th>
<th>Observation Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Instructional Setting Rating Sheet

Date____/____/___ Time__:__ to __:___ Room_____________ Teacher____________________

Directions: Rate the items below noting the instructional environment during your observation of the student. For each item, circle the response that best fits your observation. Add comments, particularly to explain items that receive low ratings.

1. The teacher made sure that the student was paying attention before giving instructions, directions, or asking questions:
   1. Not at all  2. Occasionally  3. Frequently  4. Nearly all of the time

2. The teacher monitored to be sure that the student understood the material being taught:
   1. Not at all  2. Occasionally  3. Frequently  4. Nearly all of the time

3. Classroom disruptions were handled immediately or prevented:
   1. Not at all  2. Occasionally  3. Frequently  4. Nearly all of the time

4. The teacher engaged the student in the lesson by asking questions that the student could answer:
   1. Not at all  2. Occasionally  3. Frequently  4. Nearly all of the time

5. Expectations for appropriate student behavior were clear (e.g., follow classroom rules, work carefully):
   1. Not at all  2. Occasionally  3. Frequently  4. Nearly all of the time

6. Interactions between the student and classmates were positive:
   1. Not at all  2. Occasionally  3. Frequently  4. Nearly all of the time

7. Interactions between the student and teacher were positive:
   1. Not at all  2. Occasionally  3. Frequently  4. Nearly all of the time

8. The student received immediate, specific, positive feedback about her or his behavior or academic performance:
   1. Not at all  2. Occasionally  3. Frequently  4. Nearly all of the time

9. The general noise level and behavior of other students in the classroom were conducive to group instruction or independent seatwork:
   1. Not at all  2. Occasionally  3. Frequently  4. Nearly all of the time

10. The student appeared to be placed in work that was instructionally appropriate:
    YES      NO

Comments:_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
Teacher Behavior Log & Student Behavioral Scatterplot

Directions: Record each incident of problem student behavior in the behavior log below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name: ___________________________</th>
<th>Observer: ___________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time: <em><strong>;</strong></em> a.m./p.m.   Date: <em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
<td>Location: ___________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief narrative of incident (including persons involved, scheduled activity, triggering event(s), outcome(s));</td>
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<tr>
<td>How long did this incident last? ________ mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How severe was the behavior in the incident? 1 2 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Severe Somewhat Severe Very Severe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name: ___________________________</th>
<th>Observer: ___________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time: <em><strong>;</strong></em> a.m./p.m.   Date: <em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
<td>Location: ___________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief narrative of incident (including persons involved, scheduled activity, triggering event(s), outcome(s));</td>
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<tr>
<td>How long did this incident last? ________ mins</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How severe was the behavior in the incident? 1 2 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Severe Somewhat Severe Very Severe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Behavioral Scatterplot

**Directions:** Write the student’s general daily schedule in the column labeled ‘Activity/Class Schedule’. For each day during which target problems behaviors were monitored in the student’s behavioral log, mark an ‘X’ in the appropriate date column at the time when the problem behavior occurred. When all behaviors have been plotted at the correct date and time of their occurrence, look for possible explanatory patterns between the activities scheduled and the behaviors observed -- e.g., due to physical setting variables, academic task demands, presence or absence of adult supervision, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity / Class Schedule</th>
<th>Date/Day</th>
<th>Date/Day</th>
<th>Date/Day</th>
<th>Date/Day</th>
<th>Date/Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30-7:45</td>
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<td>8:15-8:30</td>
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<td>9:45-10:00</td>
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Daily Behavior Report Cards: A Convenient Behavior Monitoring Tool

Daily Behavior Report Cards (DBRCs) are behavior rating forms that teachers use to evaluate the student's global behaviors on a daily basis or even more frequently. An advantage of DBRCs is that these rating forms are quick and convenient for the teacher to complete. This section contains daily and weekly versions of a generic DBRC, as well as a progress-monitoring chart to record cumulative monitoring chart to record cumulative DBRC ratings.

Increasing the Reliability of DBRCs. DBRCs rely heavily on teacher judgment and therefore can present a somewhat subjective view of the student's behavior. When a teacher's ratings on DBRCs are based on subjective opinions, there is a danger that the teacher will apply inconsistent standards each day when rating student behaviors. This inconsistency in assessment can limit the usefulness of report card data. One suggestion that teachers can follow to make it more likely that their report card ratings are consistent and objective over time is to come up with specific guidelines for rating each behavioral goal. For example, one item in the sample DBRC included in this section states that "The student spoke respectfully and complied with adult requests without argument or complaint." It is up to the teacher to decide how to translate so general a goal into a rubric of specific, observable criteria that permits the teacher to rate the student on this item according to a 9-point scale. In developing such criteria, the instructor will want to consider:

- **taking into account student developmental considerations.** For example, "Without argument or complaint" may mean "without throwing a tantrum" for a kindergarten student but mean "without loud, defiant talking-back" for a student in middle school.

- **tying Report Card ratings to classroom behavioral norms.** For each behavioral goal, the teacher may want to think of what the typical classroom norm is for this behavior and assign to the classroom norm a specific number rating. The teacher may decide, for instance, that the target student will earn a rating of 7 ("Usually/Always") each day that the student's compliance with adult requests closely matches that of the 'average' child in the classroom.

- **developing numerical criteria when appropriate.** For some items, the teacher may be able to translate certain more general Report Card goals into specific numeric ratings. If a DBRC item rates a student's compliance with adult requests, for example, the teacher may decide that the student is eligible to earn a rating of 7 or higher on this item on days during which instructional staff had to approach the student no more than once about noncompliance.

Charting Report Card Ratings. Daily Behavior Report Card ratings can be charted over time to provide a visual display of the student's progress toward behavioral goals. The sample DBRC (daily and weekly versions) included in this section has its own progress-monitoring chart, which permits the teacher to graph student behavior for up to 4 school weeks. The instructor simply fills in the bubble each day that matches the numerical rating that he or she assigned to the student for the specific behavioral goal. As multiple points are filled in on the graph, the instructor connects those points to create a time-series progress graph. When enough data points have been charted, the behavior graph can be used to judge the relative effectiveness of any strategies put in place to improve the student's behavior.

Using DBRCs as a Self-Monitoring Intervention. DBRCs are primarily used as a behavior-monitoring tool. However, teachers may also choose to use DBRCs as part of a student self-monitoring program, in which the student rates their own behaviors each day. If teachers decide to use student behavior report cards for self-monitoring, they should first identify and demonstrate for the student the behaviors that the
student is to monitor and show the student how to complete the behavior report card. Since it is important that the student learn the teacher's behavioral expectations, the instructor should meet with the student daily, ask the student to rate their own behaviors, and then share with the student the teacher's ratings of those same behaviors. The teacher and student can use this time to discuss any discrepancies in rating between their two forms. (If report card ratings points are to be applied toward a student reward program, the teacher might consider allowing points earned on a particular card item to count toward a reward only if the student's ratings fall within a point of the teacher's, to encourage the student to be accurate in their ratings.)

Figure 1: Example of completed DBRC progress-monitoring form

*During instructional periods, the student focused his or her attention on teacher instructions, classroom lessons and assigned work.*
Daily Classroom Behavior Report Card

| Student: ___________________ | Date: _____________________ |
| Teacher: ___________________ | Classroom: ___________________ |

Directions: Review each of the Behavior Report Card items below. For each item, rate the degree to which the student showed the behavior or met the behavior goal.

**During instructional periods, the student focused his or her attention on teacher instructions, classroom lessons and assigned work.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle the degree to which the student met the behavior goal:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never/Seldom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The student interacted with classmates appropriately and respectfully.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle the degree to which the student met the behavior goal:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never/Seldom</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**The student completed and turned in his or her assigned class work on time.**

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<tr>
<th>Circle the degree to which the student met the behavior goal:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never/Seldom</td>
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</table>

**The student spoke respectfully and complied with adult requests without argument or complaint.**

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<tr>
<th>Circle the degree to which the student met the behavior goal:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never/Seldom</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Weekly Classroom Behavior Report Card**

**Student:**
________________________________________________

**Teacher:**
__________________

**Classroom:**
_________________

**Directions:** Review each of the Behavior Report Card items below. For each item, rate the degree to which the student showed the behavior or met the behavior goal.

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<tr>
<th>Behavioral Target</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>T</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>Th</th>
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<td><em>The student interacted with classmates appropriately and respectfully.</em></td>
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**Creating Reward Menus That Motivate: Tips for Teachers**

Rewards are often central to effective school interventions. As possible incentives that students can earn for appropriate school performance or conduct, these reinforcers (or ‘rewards’) often serve as the motivational ‘engine’ that drives successful interventions.

Choosing rewards to use as incentives for a student intervention may seem simple and straightforward. A reinforcer, however, probably will not be successful unless it passes three important tests:

- **Acceptability Test.** Does the teacher approve of using the reinforcer with this child? Are parent(s) likely to approve the use of the reinforcer with their child?
- **Availability Test.** Is the reinforcer typically available in a school setting? If not, can it be obtained with little inconvenience and at a cost affordable to staff or parents?
- **Motivation Test.** Does the child find the reinforcer to be motivating?

Reward systems are usually most powerful when a student can select from a range of reward choices (‘reward menu’). Offering students a menu of possible rewards is effective because it both gives students a meaningful choice of reinforcers and reduces the likelihood that the child will eventually tire of any specific reward.

However, some children (e.g., those with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) may lose interest in specific reward choices more quickly than do their typical peers. Teachers will want to regularly update and refresh reward menus for such children to ensure these reinforcers retain their power to positively shape those students’ behaviors.

**Creating a ‘Reward Deck.’** A Reward Deck is an idea that can help teachers to quickly select and regularly update student reward menus. This strategy involves 5 steps:

1. The teacher reviews a list of reward choices typically available in school settings. (Instructors can use the comprehensive sampling of possible school rewards that appears in the next section: Jackpot! Ideas for Classroom Rewards.). From this larger list, the teacher selects only those rewards that she or he approves of using, believes would be acceptable to other members of the school community (e.g., administration, parents), and finds feasible and affordable.

2. The teacher writes out acceptable reward choices on index cards-- to create a master ‘Reward Deck’

3. Whenever the teacher wants to create a reward menu for a particular student, he or she first ‘screens’ reward choices that appear in the master Reward Deck and temporarily removes any that seem inappropriate for that specific case. (For
example, the teacher may screen out the reward ‘pizza party’ because it is too expensive to offer to a student who has only minor difficulties with homework completion.)

4. The teacher then sits with the child and presents each of the reward choices remaining in the Reward Deck. For each reward option, the child indicates whether he or she (a) likes the reward a lot, (b) likes the reward a little, or (c) doesn’t care for the reward. The teacher sorts the reward options into three piles that match these rating categories.

The teacher can then assemble that child’s Reward Menu using the student’s top choices (“like a lot”). If the instructor needs additional choices to fill out the rest of the menu, he or she can pull items from the student’s “like a little” category as well.

5. (Optional but recommended) Periodically, the instructor can meet with the student and repeat the above procedure to ‘refresh’ the Reward Menu quickly and easily.
## Troubleshooting Reward Programs: A Teacher’s Guide

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<th>Issue</th>
<th>Reason</th>
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<td>My reward program worked for a while but now it doesn't seem to be very effective.</td>
<td>There are several possible reasons why a reward program might begin to lose its effectiveness. You may want to experiment with changing aspects of the program until you find what is effective:</td>
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<td>• <strong>The student has lost interest in the current rewards.</strong> Some students need to be given new reward choices more frequently than do typical children. Every so often, make a point to readminister the ‘reward deck’ or a reward inventory to the student to update his or her list of preferred rewards.</td>
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<td>• <strong>You have become inconsistent in administering the reward program.</strong> Classrooms are busy places—so it is natural for the person who runs a reward program occasionally to forget to assign a point or give a reward. If the program is administered too inconsistently, though, it can stop working. Remember: a reward program is like a contract: its power depends entirely on how reliably it is enforced.</td>
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<td>I can't seem to find rewards that the student actually finds reinforcing.</td>
<td>Students vary a great deal in what kinds of activities, events, or opportunities they might find rewarding. No single reward choice appeals to every student. Here are some ideas to help you to figure out rewards that are likely to appeal even to picky students:</td>
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<td>• <strong>Ask the student to write down or tell you some activities that he or she likes to do.</strong> Use this list as a starting point to generate ideas for possible rewards.</td>
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<td>• <strong>Observe the activities the student picks out during free or unstructured time.</strong> Those</td>
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activities that people typically do in their free time are those that they probably find appealing. If the student spends most of his or her free time ‘hanging out’ with other kids, for instance, you can probably think up socially oriented rewards for that student.

- Ask the student’s previous teachers, parent, or other significant adult what activities or rewards the student likes. Other people who have known the student for a significant length of time may have useful insights into what rewards the student will find motivating.

| My student argues with me every time I use the reward program. | Sometimes students will verbally challenge you—insisting, for example, that you should award a point that you believe they did not earn. Here are a couple of suggestions to reduce or eliminate such arguing:

- **Build a negative consequence for “arguing” into the reward program.** Explain to the student that you will impose a consequence whenever the student argues or verbally challenges your decisions about the reward program. You might choose, for example, to deduct a point from the student’s total whenever he or she argues or suspend the reward program for 15 minutes (so that the student cannot earn points) whenever the student argues with you.

- **Avoid becoming an active participant in the argument.** It takes two to argue. As the adult, you can control student interactions by refusing to get pulled into arguments. If possible, keep your responses brief and your emotional state neutral.

- **Examine the quality of your own interactions with the student.** Students are most likely to argue with adults when they feel that they have been treated unfairly or ignored. Analyze your interactions with the student to be sure that you are not expressing anger or annoyance and that you do not use sarcasm. Consider offering the student positive opportunities to share his or her feelings or opinions with you (e.g., writing a letter, participating in a class meeting). Be sure that you are enforcing the terms of the reward program fairly—in particular, giving the student appropriate credit for good behaviors.

| Other school staff or parents sometimes disagree with the rewards that I choose. | A complicating factor in setting up reward programs is that other adults may disapprove of those rewards that you have selected. For instance, a principal may be unhappy with a teacher who rewards a student with gum for good behavior, because the school has a “no gum
• Preview potentially controversial rewards with fellow staff, school administrators, and/or the student’s parents. When in doubt, check with the school principal, other teaching staff and the student’s parent about the acceptability of a specific reward idea.

• Try to use pro-social and pro-educational reward choices whenever possible. No one objects to student rewards that build social or academic skills. If a student were motivated to play an educational math game on the computer as a reward, for example, this academic reward would usually be preferable to offering the student a food treat. In short, if you know that non-controversial rewards work for a student, use them.

• Document past reward efforts. While most students can be motivated using traditional, education-friendly rewards, you will occasionally come across students who will strive only for rewards that others might regard as less acceptable (e.g., candy, coupons to skip homework). Sometimes these ‘intervention-resistant’ students have special needs and simply do not respond to those more typical rewards that normally shape kids’ behavior. If you wish to make the case to other adults about the need to use controversial rewards with ‘intervention-resistant’ children, it may help to document that your previous attempts to use more typical rewards had been unsuccessful.

• Educate staff about special-needs students. You may also need to educate school staff about how a child’s special needs may cause him or her to react to rewards in a manner different from more typical students. A teacher may observe, for example, that a child with substantial cognitive deficits is motivated only by a chance to earn snacks—even though his more typical age-peers regularly select social activities as rewards. The target student’s intellectual deficits and relative emotional immaturity can help to explain why he is drawn to rewards more typical of a younger child.

| I am going broke trying to buy rewards for students! | It can be costly to provide motivating rewards for individual students, let alone a whole classroom! Some suggestions:

• **Use a raffle-ticket reward system.** One cost-saving idea for group rewards that can make your prizes go farther is to design an attractive paper raffle ticket, which has a space for the student’s name. Whenever the student earns a point for good behavior, have the |
• **Give ‘Activity Coupons’**. Many of the most effective student rewards are activities that are readily obtainable in a school setting. Make a list of all of the rewarding opportunities that you or your fellow teachers and administrators can make available as prizes. For instance, one school may identify “Reading to kindergarten students during their Story Time” or “Delivering morning announcements” as potentially motivating activities. For each activity, create an ‘Activity Coupon’ that describes the activity and the number of points required to earn it. Students can redeem good-behavior points that they have collected for any Activity Coupon that they can afford.

• **Build a reward program around a ‘prize box’**. Like most of us, students find novelty itself to be a motivating experience. You can use a prize box to build some excitement into a reward program, without having to purchase big-ticket items. First, decorate a large sturdy box. Fill the box with inexpensive prizes that students might find motivating (e.g., small toys, stickers). (You can even supplement the contents of the prize box with fun promotional items such as key chains or pencils.) When students earn a pre-determined number of points, they can draw the prize of choice from the box.

  student write his or her name on the ticket and toss it into a fishbowl or other container. Hold regular drawings, awarding prizes to those students whose tickets are selected.
School Success Intervention Plan for: ___________________________ Date: ____________

The student agrees to carry out the strategies listed below to promote school success:

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[Optional] If adults in school or at home will assist the student with a strategy, the ADULT responsibilities are listed below on the appropriate line(s):

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</tbody>
</table>

Name of adult(s) assisting student with strategy

Signature of Student

Signature of Adult School Contact

Signature of Parent
[if parent is part of the intervention plan]